



Anti-Trump protests have shrunk. What's it mean for 2020?

By SARA BURNETT
 Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Days after President Donald Trump killed an Iranian general and said he was sending more soldiers to the Middle East, about 100 protesters stood on a pedestrian bridge over Chicago's Lake Shore Drive with an illuminated sign that read "No War in Iran."

Some 200 people marched in the bitter cold near Boston, while a few dozen people demonstrated on the steps of Los Angeles City Hall and at similarly sized gatherings across the U.S.

Three years after Trump took office and millions of people swarmed to the Women's March in Washington and companion marches across the country, these typically modest protests are often the most visible sign of today's Trump resistance.

Activists say the numbers should not be mistaken for a lack of energy or motivation to vote Trump out of office come November.

The anti-Trump movement of 2020, they say, is more organized and more focused on action. Many people have moved from protesting to knocking on doors for candidates, mailing



In this Jan. 8, 2020, file photo, protesters of President Donald Trump's military action in Iraq gather across the Chicago River from the Trump Tower in Chicago.

Associated Press

postcards to voters, advocating for specific causes or running for office.

But the movement that sprung up to oppose Trump's presidency also is more splintered than it was when pink-hatted protesters flooded Washington

the day after his inauguration for what is generally regarded as the largest protest in the city since the Vietnam era.

There have been schisms over which presidential candidates to back in 2020, as well as disagree-

ments about race and religion and about whether the march reflected the diversity of the movement. Those divisions linger even as many on the left say they need a united front heading into November's election.

The disputes led to dueling events in New York City last year, the resignation of some national Women's March leaders and the disbanding of a group in Washington state.

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What you need to know before 2020 Census starts in Alaska

By MARK THIESSEN and MIKE SCHNEIDER

Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)

— The 2020 Census kicks off Tuesday in remote Alaska. U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham will be there to conduct the first count in the Bering Sea community of Toksook Bay. Dillingham planned to spend time Friday at the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School in Anchorage, giving students a lesson on statistics. Additional outreach is planned throughout the weekend.

WHY IS THE 2020 CENSUS STARTING IN ALASKA?

With its sparse population and subzero temperature, rural Alaska can be hard to reach, and some of its villages are accessible only

when the ground is frozen. So, the Census Bureau starts the head count in The Last Frontier state by going door-to-door in January — more than two months before the rest of the nation — so it can make sure it reaches villages before the spring thaw, when residents head out to fish and hunt. The state's heritage is traditionally on display during these first counts. In 2000, then-U.S. Census Bureau Director Kenneth Prewitt arrived for the first count in the village of Unalakleet as a passenger in a dog sled. "Our census takers will be using small planes, as I will be in a couple of days, or snowmobiles, which I'm uncertain of. But maybe that's what I'm gonna do as well," Dillingham told state and Alaska Native leaders dur-



U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham addresses state and Alaska Native leaders Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, in Anchorage, Alaska.

Associated Press

ing an appearance Friday at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage. This year, Alaska Native dancers from Toksook Bay will perform for Dillingham.

WHEN DOES IT START ELSEWHERE?

Residents in the rest of the U.S., as well as the rest of Alaska, can start responding online and by telephone in mid-March. The Census Bureau plans to send out a first round of notices explaining how to participate during the second week of March. It will send up to four more rounds of mailings, including a paper questionnaire, in March and April to households that haven't responded.

WILL SOMEONE BE KNOCKING AT MY DOOR?

Only if you fail to reply online, by mail or by telephone. This is the first census in which the Census Bureau is encouraging most people to answer the questions via the internet. Around three-quarters of households will initially get invitations to respond to the questionnaire online. However, the Census Bureau realizes some communities don't have easy access to the internet, and

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about a quarter of households will initially receive paper questionnaires that can be mailed back. By May, the Census Bureau will be sending out workers to knock on the doors of households it hasn't heard back from.

WHAT ARE THE QUESTIONS?

The form asks how many people live in the household as of April 1, whether the home is owned or rented, and the form-filler's age, race and sex.

It also asks if the form-filler is Latino, and if so, their country of origin. In the race question, the form-filler also can specify country of origin. All other residents in the household must answer, or have the first form-filler answer for them, the same questions on age, sex and race. They must specify their relationship to the form-filler and if they live elsewhere, like away at college. For the first time, same-sex couples will be able to identify as such, either as spouses or unmarried partners.

WILL MY INFORMATION BE SHARED?

No. Under federal law, all responses are kept completely confidential, and they can be used only to produce statistics.

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THE CENSUS?

Because it is used to determine who your representative in Congress is, where new businesses can build, how crowded your local schools will get over the next decade, and whether highways in your community get money for repairs. The results of the 2020 Census help determine the distribution of \$1.5 trillion in federal spending, as well as how many congressional seats each state gets. □

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Anti-Trump protests have shrunk. What's it mean for 2020?

Continued from Front

Organizers expect about 100,000 people across the country to participate in this year's Women's March, which is scheduled for Saturday in over 180 cities. They say up to 10,000 people are expected at the march in Washington, far fewer than the turnout last year, when about 100,000 people held a rally east of the White House. Instead of a single big event, the group has been holding actions in a run-up to the march this week around three key issues: climate change, immigration and reproductive rights.

The week reflects that the movement is "moving into the next stage," said director Caitlin Breedlove.

Leaders of MoveOn.org, which organized some of the anti-Iran war protests, agreed. Mobilization manager Kate Alexander said the group and its members pulled together over 370 protests in 46 states in less than 48 hours to show resistance to Trump's actions. The president ordered airstrikes that killed Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's Quds Force who has been blamed for deadly attacks on U.S. troops and allies going back decades. Iran pledged retribution, sparking fears of an all-out war. Alexander noted that the Iran protest is just one of many issues MoveOn members have organized in response to in the past few years.

"It's not that there are fewer people mobilizing — it's that they're mobilized in dif-



In this Jan. 20, 2018, file photo, participants in the Women's March gather near the Lincoln Memorial in Washington.

Associated Press

ferent campaigns. There's more to do," Alexander said. "I don't believe people are tuning out. I think people are lying in wait." While waiting, many have passed on some major moments in Trump's presidency. Resistance groups rallied on the eve of the House vote for impeachment, but even some of those who participated said they were disappointed more people didn't turn out.

Several organizations also said much of their organizing is done through social media or text message and email programs, which are less visible but have a significant impact. In 2018, the Women's March had over 24 billion social media impressions, Breedlove said. Atef Said, a sociology pro-

fessor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, said all social movements evolve over time. He noted the Trump resistance movement is global and will continue regardless of whether Trump is reelected.

"Movements always rise and decline in terms of numbers on the ground," he said.

Andy Koch, a 30-year-old nurse who lives in Chicago, has seen that ebb and flow firsthand. Koch has been active in protesting Trump's policies even before he took office. When Koch was a student at University of Illinois at Chicago, Trump's campaign canceled a 2016 speech at the campus following tense student protests.

Koch said the anti-Trump activism swelled when he

first took office and again in early 2017 when he announced his first travel ban affecting people from several predominantly Muslim countries.

Roughly 1,000 people mobilized in Chicago immediately after Trump authorized the attack on the Iranian leader, and then the crowds subsided a few days later after the threat of war seemed to subside following Trump's address to the nation Jan. 8. That day, a few dozen — including Koch — showed up in 20-degree Fahrenheit (minus 7 Celsius) temperatures outside Trump International Hotel Chicago during rush hour.

Koch understands that masses of people won't show up for every protest. "What allows those numbers

to come out ... is continued organizing going on in between these events," he said.

He said there have been numerous smaller protests he's been involved with, including protesting U.S. foreign policy in Venezuela and Syria, and they've taken other forms. For instance, he's helped plan a teach-in on Iranian foreign policy this week at UIC.

Maya Wells, a 21-year-old political science senior at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, was a speaker at a rally last week in Charlotte. Wells, who is Persian American and has family in Iran, said she doesn't look at the numbers of people who turn out but rather at the fact that they took time out of their day to be there. □



In this Dec. 20, 2019 file photo, Defense Secretary Mark Esper speaks during a news conference at the Pentagon in Washington. Associated Press

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Eleven U.S. troops flown to medical centers after Iran strike

By ROBERT BURNS

AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Eleven U.S. troops were flown out of Iraq for evaluation of concussion-like symptoms in the days following an Iranian missile strike that President Donald Trump had said caused no harm to American forces, officials said Friday.

The Pentagon's chief spokesman, Jonathan Hoffman, said Defense Secretary Mark Esper did not know of the injuries until he was told Thursday afternoon that the 11 troops had been sent for evaluation at U.S. medical facilities — eight in Germany and three in Kuwait. Hoffman said the notification to Esper was in line with military procedures, which he said do not require notification of service member casualties to the Pentagon unless they involve the loss of life, limb or eyesight.

As recently as Tuesday night, Trump said he had been told no American had been harmed in the Iranian missile strike on Jan. 8. The question of Ameri-

can casualties was especially significant at the time because the missile attack's results were seen as influencing a U.S. decision on whether to retaliate and risk a broader war with Iran. Trump chose not to retaliate, and the tensions with Iran have eased somewhat. Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who was in Washington Friday to meet with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, told reporters that Iranian leaders told him earlier this week in Tehran that their missile attack was sufficient for now as retaliation for the U.S. killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, leader of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force.

"They do not want to fight. They do not want war," Qureshi told a news conference at the Pakistan Embassy. After Esper was notified of the possible brain injuries on Thursday, U.S. Central Command put out a public statement saying "several" troops were treated for concussion symptoms from the missile blasts.

The AP had reported this on Monday when reporters were allowed to visit the attacked base, Ain al-Asad, in western Iraq. Thursday's statement said that "out of an abundance of caution," some of the injured troops were flown out of Iraq for follow-on screening. Medical personnel at Ain al-Asad do not have a magnetic resonance imaging scanner, which can be used to diagnose brain injuries.

"I think everyone would agree that we could consider this an injury," Hoffman said of the concussion symptoms, which he said became apparent over a period of days. Most or all of the troops initially resumed their military duties, he said. One service member with concussion-like symptoms was flown out of Iraq on Jan. 10; the rest were taken out five days later, Hoffman said. He denied that anyone had downplayed the lethal potential of the Iranian missiles or delayed the reporting of the injuries out of political considerations. □

Ex-US Rep. Collins gets over 2 years in insider trading case

By LARRY NEUMEISTER and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A former congressman who was one of President Donald Trump's first supporters was sentenced Friday to two years and two months in federal prison after admitting he helped his son and others dodge \$800,000 in stock market losses when he learned that a drug trial by a small pharmaceutical company had failed.

Christopher Collins, 69, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Vernon S. Broderick in Manhattan after the Republican pleaded guilty in October to conspiracy to commit securities fraud and lying to law enforcement offi-



Former U.S. Rep. Chris Collins arrives at federal court for sentencing Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, in New York. Collins pleaded guilty last fall to insider trading and lying to the FBI.

Associated Press

cials.

Collins broke down and apologized to his family and his former constituents and colleagues.

"I stand here today as a disgraced former member of Congress," he said. □

"My life has been shattered."

The sentence came even after Collins' lawyers argued he was sorry and should face no prison time in the insider trading case. □

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ICE leader blames 'sanctuary' policies for NYC killing

By JIM MUSTIAN
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The country's top immigration official blamed the "sanctuary policies" of New York City on Friday for the sexual assault and killing of a 92-year-old woman, while the mayor's office decried such rhetoric as "fear, hate and attempts to divide."

Matthew Albence, the acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, said at a news conference Friday that the slaying could have been prevented if city officials had complied with a federal request to turn over the assailant, a Guyanese national, for deportation.

"It's unbelievable that I have to come here and plead with the city of New York to cooperate with us to help keep this city safe," Albence said.

"Make no mistake," he added. "It is this city's sanctuary policies that are the sole reason this criminal was allowed to roam the streets freely and end an innocent woman's life."

Mayor Bill de Blasio has accused ICE of "spreading lies" and employing "scare tactics" that destroy trust in law enforcement. He said on Twitter this week that the city has passed "common-sense laws about immigration enforcement that have driven crime to record lows."

"Fear, hate and attempts to divide are signatures of the Trump Administration, not New York City," de Blasio spokeswoman Freddi Goldstein said Friday. "We are the safest big city in America because of our policies, not in spite of them."

The remarks come amid an escalation of the conflict between the Trump administration and so-called sanctuary cities, and a week after the Guyanese man wanted for deportation was charged with sexually assaulting and killing the 92-year-old woman in Queens.

Reeaz Khan, 21, had been arrested in November on earlier charges of assault and criminal possession of

a weapon, having allegedly beaten up his father. He was released after his arraignment even though immigration officials said they filed a "detainer" request with the New York City Police Department asking that Khan be handed over for deportation.

New York City police say they didn't get the request, though ICE insists it was sent. But even if they did, under the terms of New York's local ordinance governing how the police work with immigration officials, they would not have turned over information on Khan.

Albence said ICE is considering expanding its use of "administrative subpoenas"



Matthew Albence, right, the acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, speaks during a news conference, Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, in New York.

Associated Press

to law enforcement agencies around the country that do not share information like the addresses, driver's license and passport numbers about undocumented residents who come through their local jails.

ICE subpoenaed Denver

this week seeking information on three Mexican nationals and one Honduran who had been in custody there. The city declined the request, saying it could be "viewed as an effort to intimidate officers into helping enforce civil immigration law." □

Police: Note alerted teacher to gun in student's backpack

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina's Department of Juvenile Justice took a 13-year-old boy into custody after another student handed a teacher a note saying the teen claimed he was going to shoot people, and police found a handgun in his backpack.

An administrator and a teacher at Haut Gap Middle School on Johns Island told officers they found the weapon and ammu-

nition in the student's bag Wednesday after another student gave the science teacher a handwritten note saying the boy "said he was going to shoot us" and "has a gun and some bullets in his bookbag," the teacher told police.

The officer found the handgun, a magazine with eight rounds in it and a second magazine with six rounds in it, inside the bag, a police report obtained by news outlets stated. □

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U.S. agency examining Tesla unintended acceleration complaint

By TOM KRISHER

AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — The U.S. government's auto safety agency is looking into allegations that all three of Tesla's electric vehicle models can suddenly accelerate on their own.

Brian Sparks of Berkeley, California, petitioned the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration asking for an investigation. An agency document shows 127 owner complaints to the government that include 110 crashes and 52 injuries.

The agency said it will look into allegations that cover about 500,000 Tesla vehicles including Model 3, Model S and Model X vehicles from the 2013 through 2019 model years. The agency's investigations office will evaluate the petition and decide if it should open a formal probe.

"I am concerned that these complaints reflect a systemic defect that has not been investigated by NHTSA," Sparks wrote to James Owens, the acting NHTSA administrator. "I am also concerned that these potential defects represent risk to the safety of Tesla drivers, their passengers, and the public."

Messages were left Friday seeking comment from Tesla.

NHTSA is already investigating three December crashes involving Tesla vehicles in which three people were killed. The agency's special crash investigations unit sent teams to Gardena, California, and near Terre



This Sept. 30, 2016, file photo shows the logo of the Tesla model S at the Paris Auto Show in Paris, France.

Haute, Indiana, to probe two fatal crashes. Another crash in Connecticut also is under investigation.

Frank Borris, a former head of safety defect investigations for NHTSA, said the number of complaints cited in the petition is unusual and warrants further investigation.

"The sheer number of complaints would certainly catch my eye," said Borris, who now runs an auto safety consulting business.

Tesla owners communicate with other owners on Internet forums and social media, and that could influence the number of complaints, he said.

He said the timing of the petition is good, because the agency needs to do a "deeper dive" into Tesla safety.

Some of the unintended acceleration complaints, which have yet to be verified by NHTSA, allege that the cars' electronics malfunctioned.

In his 69-page petition, Sparks analyzed the complaints to NHTSA and determined that many of the crashes happened while drivers were parking the Teslas. He compared Tesla's unintended acceleration complaint rate to other vehicles and found Tesla's to be much higher.

Many of the reports, Sparks wrote, show that Tesla has refused to share data with vehicle owners after an unintended acceleration incident. "It is clear that Tesla has the data and is aware of the problem," Sparks wrote.

In one complaint, an owner

in San Clemente, California, told NHTSA that in November of 2018, a Model X SUV accelerated on its own to full power during a U-Turn on a city street. The driver had a foot on the brake, but the SUV accelerated in a fraction of a second, according to the complaint. The driver alleged that something in Tesla's system "triggered the sudden spontaneously full acceleration, resulting in this collision."

The SUV hit a parked vehicle, the air bags inflated and the owner had a large abdominal bruise and several small chest bruises, according to the complaint. People who file complaints with NHTSA are not identified in the agency's database.

The driver asked NHTSA to

Associated Press

find out whether the Tesla complaints had common elements, including parking or making turns at low speeds.

In another crash, in May of 2013, the owner of a Model S sedan in Thousand Oaks, California, complained that while pulling into a parking spot, the car suddenly accelerated on its own.

The Model S went over a parking block and a curb and struck a cement light post. The air bags inflated, but no one was hurt, the complaint said.

Three weeks after the crash, the owner got a letter from Tesla saying that the accelerator was depressed to 48% just before the crash and 98% at the time of impact. The owner still believes the car accelerated by itself, the complaint stated.

Anyone can petition NHTSA to investigate an auto safety problem, and the agency said in a statement Friday that it encourages people to report concerns. In the other Tesla crashes that NHTSA is investigating, authorities are trying to determine whether the cars were operating on Autopilot, a system designed to keep a car in its lane and a safe distance from other vehicles. Autopilot also can change lanes on its own. Separately, the National Transportation Safety Board will hold a hearing Feb. 25 on a fatal crash in Mountain View, California, involving a Tesla that was operating on the company's Autopilot driver assist system. □

Plane slides off taxiway in icy weather as storm hits U.S.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — A plane slid off an icy taxiway at Kansas City International Airport on Friday as a sprawling winter storm hits large sections of the Midwest and beyond, leading to the closure of schools, universities and government offices.

The Delta Air Lines flight was taxiing to be de-iced before flying to Detroit when the nose gear slipped off the taxiway, said Delta

spokeswoman Martha Witt. There were no reports of injuries aboard the Airbus A319, which was carrying 123 passengers and a crew of six. Witt said the airline was trying to put passengers from Delta flight 1114 on other planes.

The airport was closed and numerous flights were canceled in the morning but flights resumed about noon. Most Friday flights from Nashville, Tennessee,

were canceled, likely disrupting travel plans for fans of the Tennessee Titans flying into Kansas City for Sunday's AFC championship game with the Chiefs, KCTV reported. Lambert International Airport in St. Louis reported more than 130 flights canceled as of noon Friday and American Airlines suspended all flights to Missouri's Columbia Regional Airport until noon Saturday. The slippery

conditions come after the National Weather Service issued winter weather advisories, saying the storm will create hazardous travel conditions from the Plains into the Northeast through the weekend. Snow is forecast over much of the Great Lakes, with a blizzard warning for parts of the Upper Midwest. The winter weather advisory extended south into western Oklahoma and northern Arkansas, where freezing rain was expected Friday.

In South Dakota and Minnesota, dozens of schools canceled classes Friday ahead of snowfall expected during the day.

In Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly closed state offices in the Topeka area, urging people in a news release to "stay safe and warm, exercise caution and allow road crews to do their job." □

Virginia's highest court upholds weapons ban at gun rally

By DENISE LAVOIE
Legal Affairs Writer

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Virginia's highest court on Friday upheld a ban on firearms at an upcoming pro-gun rally in the state's capital, an event that authorities feared could erupt in violence at the hands of armed extremists.

The Virginia Supreme Court's decision came a day after gun-rights groups sued to overturn the ban that Gov. Ralph Northam issued earlier this week, citing credible threats of "armed militia groups storming our Capitol."

The lawsuit and court rulings came as the FBI ar-

rested six men who authorities linked to a white supremacist group known as The Base. At least three of them were planning to attend the pro-gun rally on Monday on the grounds of the state Capitol in Richmond, according to an official who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss an active investigation.

Virginia has become Ground Zero in the nation's raging debate over gun control, as a new Democratic majority in the state legislature has promised to pass an array of restrictions, including universal background checks and a red-

flag law.

Gun-rights groups argued the ban would violate their Second Amendment right to bear arms and their First Amendment freedom of speech. But a Richmond judge upheld the ban on Thursday, citing rulings from the U.S. Supreme Court and other courts that the Second Amendment right to bear arms is not unlimited. Philip Van Cleave, president of the Virginia Citizens Defense League — the group sponsoring the rally — called that ruling "mind-boggling." The group did not respond immediately to the Supreme Court ruling.

In his legal brief to the high court, Herring called



The Virginia state Capitol building is surrounded by fencing, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020 in Richmond, Va., in preparation for Monday's rally by gun rights advocates.

Associated Press

Northam's executive order "a carefully limited Executive Order" that "does not prevent anyone from speaking, assembling, or petitioning the government."

"Instead, it temporarily precludes private possession of firearms in a sensitive public place during a specified time to protect public safety," the brief says.

Herring argued Northam's order would help prevent the kind of violence that erupted at a 2017 white nationalist rally in the city of Charlottesville.

One woman was killed and more than 30 others were hurt when a white supremacist drove his car into a crowd. No one was wounded by gunfire at the rally. □



A car speeds past the additional drainage pumps on the Oktibbeha County Lake dam near Starkville, Miss., Wednesday afternoon, Jan. 15, 2020.

Associated Press

New sinkhole found at endangered Mississippi dam

STARKVILLE, Miss. (AP) — An inspection found a new sinkhole at a Mississippi lake where an earthen dam could fail because of high water levels linked to heavy rains, officials said Friday. The sinkhole was discovered at Oktibbeha County Lake on Thursday after county supervisors approved a plan to drain the lake in an effort to keep it from breaching, the Starkville Daily News reported.

Measuring about 3 feet (0.9 meters) deep and 4 feet (1.2 meters) wide, the hole hadn't gotten larger by Friday, but of-

ficials feared that could change with heavy rain predicted over the weekend.

County engineer Clyde Pritchard said the surface area of the lake already has doubled to about 900 acres (360 hectares), and he estimated it could take as long as 24 days to lower the water level by just 5 feet (1.5 meters) using pumps that move 25,000 gallons (94,600 liters) of water a minute.

The lake is about 10 miles (16 kilometers) northwest of Starkville, the home of Mississippi State University. □



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Canada provides money to families after plane shot down

By ROB GILLIES
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Friday his government will give Canadian \$25,000 (US\$19,122) to the families of each of the 57 citizens and 29 permanent residents of Canada who died in the downing of a Ukrainian jetliner in Iran last week. Trudeau said he still expects Iran to compensate the families but added that they need help now for funerals, travel to Iran and bills. He said any money Iran provides at a later date will go straight to the families and will not be reimbursed to the Canadian government.

"I want to be clear, we expect Iran to compensate these families," Trudeau said. "But I have met them. They can't wait weeks. They need support now."

Asked if the U.S. bears any responsibility after President Donald Trump ordered the killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, Iran's top general, in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad, Trudeau said Iran bears full responsibility for having shot down a civilian airline with 176 people aboard. The prime minister also said the "black boxes"



Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau arrives at a press conference at the National Press Theatre in Ottawa, Friday, Jan. 17, 2020.

Associated Press

have been significantly damaged and Iran does not have the expertise or equipment needed to look at them. He said France has a lab that can do it. He said there is a need to do it as quickly as possible. The spokesman for the French accident investigating bureau, or BEA, said it has no information about eventually obtaining the demolished airplane's black boxes, the voice and data recorders, to decipher them. Sébastien

Barthe added that it is up to Iran, which is in charge of the investigation, to decide the matter.

Trudeau said no remains of Canadian victims have returned to Canada yet but he expects that to start happening in the coming days.

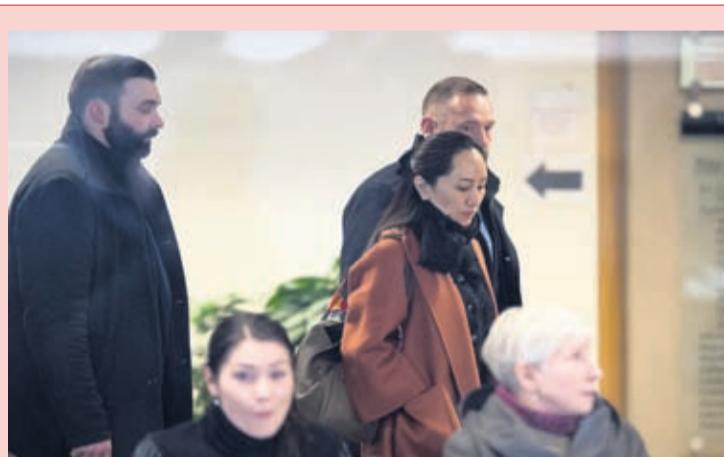
Trudeau held the news conference in Ottawa after Canadian Foreign Minister François-Philippe Champagne met his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, in Muscat,

Oman on Friday. A statement from Champagne's office said the two discussed the need to provide consular services to assist in ensuring victim identification and the importance of a transparent investigation.

"The Ministers also discussed the need for a transparent analysis of the black box data, to which Iran agreed. In addition, they discussed the duty Iran has towards the families of the victims — including compensation,"

the statement reads. "Minister Zarif expressed his support for Iran continuing to work with Canada and all grieving nations in these respects."

Canada suspended diplomatic relations with Iran in 2012, but Trudeau and Canada's foreign minister have been in touch with their Iranian counterparts since the plane was shot down. Iran downed the flight as it braced for possible American retaliation after firing ballistic missiles at two bases in Iraq housing U.S. forces. The missile attack, which caused no U.S. casualties, was a response to the killing of Iran's top general. Trudeau has called the downing a Canadian tragedy because 138 of the passengers were headed for Canada. He confirmed for the first time that those included 29 permanent residents of Canada. They included students, newlyweds, doctors and parents. The youngest was a 1-year-old girl. Top diplomats from the countries who had victims met in London on Thursday to demand Tehran accept "full responsibility" and pay compensation to the victims' families. □



Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou, who is out on bail and remains under partial house arrest after she was detained last year at the behest of American authorities, leaves B.C. Supreme Court following a case management hearing, Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, in Vancouver, British Columbia. Huawei

By JIM MORRIS
Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Defense lawyers argue a senior executive of the Chinese tech giant Huawei should not be extradited to the U.S. because her actions would not be considered

crimes under Canadian law. The extradition hearing for Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou is scheduled to begin Monday. Meng, the daughter of the company's founder, faces charges of committing fraud to try and evade U.S. sanctions on

CFO lawyers say her alleged crimes no crime in Canada

Iran. Huawei is China's first global tech brand and Beijing views her case as a political move designed to prevent China's rise.

"This is a case of U.S. sanctions enforcement masquerading as Canadian fraud," say defense documents released Friday.

Meng was arrested at the Vancouver airport in late 2018 at the request of the U.S. government. American prosecutors allege she made misrepresentations to foreign banks, including London-based HSBC, about Huawei's relationship with its Iran-based affiliate Skycom.

Last week, the Canadian Department of Justice released documents supporting its case the allega-

tions against Meng meet the extradition test of "double criminality" meaning if they had occurred in Canada, they would be criminal under Canadian law. Defense lawyers dispute that claim, arguing it's not illegal in Canada to do business with Iran.

"Canada not only permits banks to do business with Iran-based entities, it encourages them to do so," the documents say.

The documents point out the prosecution has argued Meng's actions have caused HSBC to be placed at risk of financial prejudice for offering banking service to Huawei and Skycom because of U.S. sanctions.

"Simply put, a bank in

Canada would not be concerned that Huawei's relationship with Skycom could trigger sanctions risk," the documents say.

Meng made a brief court appearance Friday where lawyers discussed additional court dates. The first stage of the extradition hearing dealing is expected to last five days.

Meng is free on bail and is living in one of the two Vancouver mansions she owns. Beijing detained former two Canadians, ex-diplomat Michael Kovrig and businessman Michael Spavor, in late 2018 in an apparent attempt to pressure Canada to release Meng. They have not had access to lawyers or their families. □



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Ukrainian president rejects prime minister's resignation

By YURAS KARMAU

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy rejected his prime minister's offer to resign and asked him to stay on the job Friday after he was caught on tape saying Zelenskiy — a former sitcom star with no previous political experience — knows nothing about the economy.

In a video released by Zelenskiy's office, the president called the situation "unpleasant" but asked Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk and his Cabinet to carry on.

"I decided to give you and your government a chance if you manage to solve important issues that the public worries about," Zelenskiy said as he faced Honcharuk across the table.

"It's not a moment when we can afford economic and political destabilization."

He instructed Honcharuk to look into multimillion-dollar bonuses given to executives of the state-controlled gas company and high salaries for Cabinet ministers that angered many in the economically struggling nation, directing the prime minister to report his findings by Feb. 4.

The furor comes at a fraught moment for Zelenskiy, who has found himself in the middle of the impeachment case unfolding against President Donald Trump in Washington. Trump stands accused of withholding nearly \$400 million in military aid to Ukraine to pressure the country's leader to investigate Trump

political rival Joe Biden. In the audio recording that surfaced earlier this week, Honcharuk was heard making what appeared to

history teacher who is propelled to the highest office after his rant against government corruption goes viral.

enskiy's party. It presented a legal quandary since Ukrainian law prevent the Cabinet's dismissal for a year after it



In this file photo taken Thursday, Oct. 10, 2019, Ukraine's Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk during the business forum in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Associated Press

be disparaging comments about Zelenskiy's understanding of economics. He called Zelenskiy "a layman" in economics and said the president should be better educated about the national currency.

Zelenskiy, 41, is a former comedian whose only political experience before his election last spring consisted of playing a Ukrainian president on TV.

He starred in "Servant of the People" as a high school

In a Facebook post earlier Friday, Honcharuk praised Zelenskiy as "an example of transparency and decency to me" and argued that the recording was manipulated, but announced that he was submitting a letter of resignation "in order to dispel any doubts about our respect and trust for the president."

The offer to step down was subject to approval by the Rada, Ukraine's parliament, which is dominated by Zel-

presents its program. Honcharuk did so in September.

Analysts said the dismissal of Honcharuk and his Cabinet would badly damage the president and upset Ukraine's talks with international lenders.

"Zelenskiy fears an internal political crisis and doesn't want problems in talks with Western investors and the International Monetary Fund," said Volodymyr Sidenko, an analyst with the Razumkov Center think tank.

"Honcharuk's resignation can destroy the idea of the government's unity and cast a doubt on Zelenskiy's ability to control the situation."

Sidenko charged that tycoons unhappy with the recent strengthening of the Ukrainian currency — a move that hurt their business — could be behind the scandal.

"Several big oligarchs who own export-oriented businesses were interested in the resignation of Honcharuk's Cabinet," Sidenko said. Honcharuk said that the recording was a compilation of "fragments of recorded government meetings," and he blamed unidentified "influential groups" for making it look as if he didn't respect the president.

"It is not true," the prime minister insisted.

Zelenskiy demanded an investigation into the source of the recording.

While Zelenskiy is a member of Servant of the People party and Honcharuk is an independent, it was Zelenskiy who proposed him to the parliament as prime minister. □

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Bangladesh says once-submerged island ready for Rohingya

By JULHAS ALAM
Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) —

A Bangladeshi island regularly submerged by monsoon rains is ready to house 100,000 Rohingya refugees, but no date has been announced to relocate people from the crowded and squalid camps where they've lived for years, officials said Thursday.

Flood protection embankments, houses, hospitals and mosques have been built on Bhasan Char, or floating island, in the Bay of Bengal, officials said.

"Bhasan Char is ready for habitation. Everything has been put in place," Bangladesh refugee, relief and repatriation commissioner Mahbub Alam Talukder told The Associated Press.

The island is built to accommodate 100,000 people, just a fraction of the million Rohingya Muslims who have fled waves of violent persecution in their native Myanmar.

About 700,000 people came after August 2017, when the military in Buddhist-majority Myanmar began a harsh crackdown against Rohingya in response to an attack by insurgents. Global rights groups and the U.N. called the campaign ethnic cleansing involving rapes,



In this Thursday, Dec. 19, 2019 photo, a man walks past buildings on Bhasan Char, or floating island, in the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh.

killings and torching of thousands of homes.

Foreign media have not been permitted to visit the island.

"I saw a market with about 10 grocery shops and roadside tea stalls. Some were selling fish and vegetables," he said. "All is set there with a solar power system and water supply lines."

Bangladesh is a low-lying delta nation. The island, 21 miles (34 kilometers) from the mainland, surfaced only 20 years ago and was never inhabited.

The Bangladesh navy has been implementing a multi-million-dollar plan to bolster the swampy island, which is submerged for months during annual monsoon season.

International aid agencies and the United Nations have vehemently opposed the relocation plan since it was first proposed in 2015, expressing fear that a big storm could overwhelm the island and endanger thousands of lives.

Mostofa Mohammd Sazzad Hossain, a spokesman

for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Bangladesh, said Thursday the agency isn't ready to endorse the relocation and is waiting for a chance to visit the island after a November trip was canceled. "The U.N. has emphasized the importance of undertaking independent and thorough technical and protection assessments that consider safety, sustainability, and protection issues prior to any relocation taking into place. The assessment process should

Associated Press

include onsite visits to Bhasan Char," Hossain said. The current refugee camps near the beach town of Cox's Bazar are overcrowded and unhygienic. Disease and organized crime are rampant. Education is limited and refugees aren't allowed to work.

Still, most Rohingya are unwilling to return to Myanmar due to safety concerns. Government officials didn't have an estimate of how many refugees would be willing to be relocated to the island.

On Thursday, two Bangladeshi contractors involved with development of the island described construction there. They spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

"We have built quality infrastructure. Bangladeshi villages have never seen such good work. This is like a modern township project," one contractor said.

"We have built multifamily concrete homes, hospitals, mosques, schools, playgrounds and roads. There are solar-power facilities, a water supply system. We constructed raised concrete buildings that could be used as cyclone shelters. Many trees have been planted," he said. □

SoftBank to invest \$40 billion for new Indonesia capital

By EDNA TARIGAN
Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) —

Japan's SoftBank is offering to invest \$30 billion to \$40 billion in the development of a new Indonesian capital, an official said Friday.

The billionaire founder and chief executive of SoftBank Group Corp., Masayoshi Son, hinted at partnering with the Indonesian government to fund the project when he met President Joko Widodo last week in the capital, Jakarta.

Son and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair have been included in the steering committee to



In this Nov. 6, 2019, file photo, SoftBank founder and Chief Executive Officer Masayoshi Son speaks during a news conference in Tokyo.

Associated Press

oversee the construction of the new capital city on Borneo island that would be led by Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Indonesian Coordinating Maritime Affairs and Investment Minister Luhut Pandjaitan told a news briefing that SoftBank was offering around \$30 billion to \$40 billion, though it was not immediately clear what project the Japanese conglomerate would invest in specifically.

"We have not yet decided how they would invest, it could be for education, a research center or hospital development," Pan-

djaitan said. He said he will meet Son in Davos and Tokyo later this month to finalize the plan.

Widodo announced last August that Indonesia's capital will move from overcrowded, sinking and polluted Jakarta to a site in sparsely populated East Kalimantan province on Borneo island, known for rainforests and orangutans.

The capital's relocation to a 256,000-hectare (632,580-acre) site almost four times the size of Jakarta will cost an estimated 466 trillion rupiah (\$34 billion). The government is set to begin the construction later this year. □



In this photo taken Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020, a Samburu man who works for a county disaster team identifying the location of the locusts, holds one on his hand near the village of Sissia, in Samburu county, Kenya.

Associated Press

Locust outbreak, most serious in 25 years, hits East Africa

By ELIAS MESERET and CARA ANNA

Associated Press

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia

(AP) — The most serious outbreak of locusts in 25 years is spreading across East Africa and posing an unprecedented threat to food security in some of the world's most vulnerable countries, authorities say. Unusual climate conditions are partly to blame.

The locust swarms hang like shimmering dark clouds on the horizon in some places. Roughly the length of a finger, the insects fly together by the millions and are devouring crops and forcing people in some areas to bodily wade through them. Near the Kenyan town of Isiolo on Thursday, one young camel herder swung a stick at them, with little effect. Others tried to shout them away.

An "extremely dangerous increase" in locust swarm activity has been reported in Kenya, the East African regional body reported this week. One swarm measured 60 kilometers (37 miles) long by 40 kilometers (25 miles) wide in the country's northeast, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development said in a statement. The outbreak of desert locusts, considered the most dangerous locust species, also has affected parts of Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea and IGAD warns that parts of South Sudan and Ugan-

da could be next. The outbreak is making the region's bad food security situation worse, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization has warned. Hundreds of thousands of acres of crops have been destroyed.

Already millions of people cope with the constant risk of drought or flooding, as well as deadly unrest in Ethiopia, extremist attacks in Somalia and lingering fighting in South Sudan as it emerges from civil war. The further increase in locust swarms could last until June as favorable breeding conditions continue, IGAD said, helped along by unusually heavy flooding in parts of the region in recent weeks.

Major locust outbreaks can be devastating. A major one between 2003 and 2005 cost more than \$500 million to control across 20 countries in northern Africa, the FAO has said, with more than \$2.5 billion in harvest losses.

To help prevent and control outbreaks, authorities analyze satellite images, stockpile pesticides and conduct aerial spraying. In Ethiopia, officials said they have deployed four small planes to help fight the invasion. But one approach backfired in Kenya in recent days when the agriculture minister asked people to post photos on social media of suspected locusts, or "nzige" in Swahili. □



Striking employees hold banners outside the Louvre museum Friday, Jan. 17, 2020 in Paris.

Associated Press

Protests close Louvre museum in Paris amid pension strikes

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Dozens of protesters blocked the entrance to the Louvre museum and forced the famous Paris landmark to close Friday while they denounced the French government's plans to overhaul the pension system.

The protesters, who included some Louvre employees, staged the demonstration against President Emmanuel Macron's proposals after several hard-left trade unions appealed for public actions to oppose that they said would "lower everyone's pensions."

The museum's Leonardo da Vinci exhibit marking the 500th anniversary of the Italian master's death was included in the closure. Some protesters chanted, "Mona Lisa is on strike, Leonardo is on strike."

It is the first time since railway strikes and protests against the pension overhaul began on Dec. 5 that the Louvre and its Leonardo exhibit were fully shut down. About 30,000 people visit the museum every day.

Some videos on social media showed angry visitors booing at museum protesters to express their disappointment.

Some of those shut out of the Louvre were upset, while a few interviewed expressed solidarity with the

strikers. "I think it's fine if they want to protest but they shouldn't block the plans of the people who have flown over here to see an exhibition of Leonardo," said Ben Garrett of Dallas, Texas.

Gerhard Jehle of Germany, who had bought his ticket in advance, shared that view, and said he was "badly informed about the extent of the strike."

"I don't understand how this happens," Jehle said. "Public transport doesn't function. The unions have to be controlled with an iron hand."

Argentinian Marcelo Campano, who also had a ticket, said that he understands workers' bid to confront a government they perceive as "neoliberal ... So we'll show our solidarity and come back another day."

The action at the Louvre was one of several signs of mounting tensions among strikers.

Several dozen people on Friday invaded the headquarters of the CFDT union, which is favorable to a point-system Macron wants to put in place to determine retirement benefits.

The invaders were seen on video singing and mocking the union's leader. Macron condemned the action as violent, unacceptable and "shameful for our democracy." □

In a more playful bid for attention, dozens of lawyers opposing the president's proposed pension reforms put on a dance show in Versailles wearing their black robes.

The weeks of strikes and protests have hobbled public transportation and disrupted schools, hospitals, courthouses and even opera houses and the Eiffel tower.

Major French retailers Fnac Darty and Casino said that business in France has been badly affected by the strikes, especially during the holiday season.

Fnac Darty said the strikes cost it around 70 million euros (\$78 million) in lost revenue.

Casino cut its forecast for earnings growth in France, where it does more than half its business, to 5% in 2019, from a previous 10%. The company estimates that the strikes in December cost it about 80 million euros in lost revenue.

Shares in both companies were down by more than 5%.

The prime minister's office said earlier this week that the SNCF train authority and the RATP, which runs public transport, had lost over a billion euros since the start of the strike. Trains have suffered most, so far losing some 850 million euros. □

Panama man pulled 2 children from clutches of killer cult

By JUAN ZAMORANO

Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Panama (AP) — Indigenous farmer Jose González recalled how his pregnant wife and five of his children were taken from their home by cult members in the remote hamlet of El Terrón in Panama. González was out working his fields of taro and rice on Monday when the lay preachers of the "The New Light of God" came for the family and dragged them to an improvised church at a nearby ranch.

The family had been chosen by one of the lay preachers who earlier had a vision: everyone in the hamlet had to repent their sins, or die. There, the woman, seven of her children and a female neighbor were beaten into repenting. If they didn't do so convincingly, lay preachers holding cudgels, machetes and Bibles would lay into them. González began a desperate campaign to save them. Outnumbered, he was able to retrieve two children — a girl of five and a boy of seven — from the church.

"I was able to snatch them from the fire they were in," said González, 39, on Thursday as he sat, exhausted, in shorts, with muddied feet and plastic sandals, outside a hospital in the neighboring province of Veraguas, waiting for another of his



Jose Gonzalez, left, follows his 5-year-old daughter, carried by a police officer, as they leave a hospital in Santiago, Panama, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020.

Associated Press

kids to be released.

The fire reference was metaphorical, but authorities reported some of the estimated 20 victims of the preachers were burned with embers during the rituals.

González then dashed to try to save the rest of his family. But the remote hamlet, nestled in the jungle of the indigenous Ngabé Buqué enclave of Panama's Caribbean coast, is hours from the nearest clinic, or police force.

"I looked for help from the authorities, but they didn't respond. When they didn't respond, I lost everything,"

he said. By the time authorities arrived by helicopter on Tuesday, it was too late for many. They found 14 bound, beaten townspeople in the church building, and a ritually sacrificed goat along with machetes and 10 lay preachers.

But a mile (2 kilometers) away, they found a freshly covered grave at a local cemetery, from which they extracted a total of seven bodies — the woman, her five children, and a teenage neighbor.

"They decapitated them," González said. Only one other son, 15, managed to escape on his own, despite

being beaten by the fanatics.

While fanaticism sparked the tragedy, the area's isolation — and the poverty and lack of services for the indigenous Ngabé and Buqué peoples — had a role.

"I need the government to help people in remote areas with little access, where you have to walk so far," said González.

Apparently, the sect is relatively new to the area, and had been operating locally only for about three months and there were few warning signs.

The Assistant Director of the National Police, Alexis Mu-

ñoz, said the "New Light of God" believers had been "acting normally. It wasn't a group that was doing anything against the community."

"Then one of the members traveled outside the community, and when he returned a couple of months later, he brought back this idea that anyone who disagreed with their beliefs was against them and action had to be taken."

Things reportedly came to a head Saturday, when one of the church members had a vision.

"One of them said God had given them a message," said local prosecutor Rafael Baloyes. That message apparently boiled down to making everyone confess their sins or die.

Andrew Chesnut, a professor of religious studies specializing in Latin America at Virginia Commonwealth University, said the sect appears to be a "syncretic cult" espousing a "hodgepodge of beliefs stitched together" with Pentecostalism at its core but also elements of indigenous beliefs and even New Age philosophy — it reportedly talked about the importance of the "third eye" on a now-deleted Facebook page.

The ritually sacrificed goat found at the scene is "anathema to any Christian practice, seen as idolatry," Chesnut added. □

Guatemala sends troops to fight gangs in 2 high-crime areas



A police stops a motorcyclist to search him at a security checkpoint in the El Milagro area of the Mixco municipality on the outskirts of Guatemala City, Friday, Jan. 17, 2020.

Associated Press

By SONNY FIGUEROA

Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Guatemala's new president announced a state of alert for two municipalities with high crime rates to combat gang activity Friday, a measure that allows the deployment of military troops.

Alejandro Giammattei said it will remain in place for seven days in Mixco and San Juan Sacatepequez, both of which are on the outskirts of the capital, and the army and National Civil Police will be tasked with arresting gang members operating in the area.

"The battle begins against crime, killings, extortion and the organized groups of gangs," said Giammattei, who took office Tuesday.

The Defense Ministry said 1,000 soldiers were assigned to the operations.

Under Guatemalan law, the measure allows for the militarization of public services, restricting public gatherings, prohibiting the circulation or parking of vehicles in determined areas and barring the carrying of firearms. The decree was signed by all of Giammattei's Cabinet ministers and took effect with its publication in the official gazette.

Carlos Menocal, a former interior minister, applauded the measure and said it targets gangs in two areas where they have near-total control over the communities and extortion has been on the rise.

"But you also have to promote a culture of denouncing (crime) on the part of the population so that the gang members can be captured," Menocal said.

On the campaign trail and at his inauguration, Giammattei, a conservative physician said he would present a bill to lawmakers that would declare gangs to be terrorist groups. □

LOCAL



ORANJESTAD — Alexa Perez Vallecilla, 18, participated in the after-school program of the Heart-Centered Leadership Foundation (HCLF) which is based in San Nicolas. The Happy Community Initiative (HCI) is looking for your support to help more youngsters on our island stay on the right track by setting up these qualified after-school programs. "This program is meant for students that have certain difficulties at school. They have concentration issues and loss of focus, due to either a disturbed domestic situation or certain traumas they went through in the past."

For Alexa, her home situation was problematic, and she felt left alone. "I was raised by my grandmother in Colombia and I was sent here to my mom's at the age of 11. But my lifestyle was completely different than hers, and we had many arguments. At school, I did not speak the language and I had to learn three new languages which are Papiamento, Dutch and English. It was so hard because the teachers only spoke those languages, and I only knew Spanish." She felt alone again and it was difficult for her to connect to other students. "I felt pressure at home as well as at school." HCLF was there to help as they were collaborating with the school (Colegio Santo Filomena) to support youngsters like Alexa in their struggle.

It's all about mindset

"I was very outspoken and expressed myself in a strong way, which made others understand me wrong. I also talked too much," Alexa says. HCLF helped her take things in another way. "My attitude has its origin from my Latin culture, we have temperament and raise voice easily." The after-school program was offered to certain students that were selected by the teachers. "Initially I felt embarrassed to receive such an invitation because it seemed like something was wrong with me. That I was a rebel, an outcast." The program was twice a week at school and she decided to continue although in the beginning she found it a bit strange. "There were these role playing games which occurred childish to me, but then they explained the idea behind it and it is actually amazing. It works psychological and makes you look at things in a different way. It is all about your mindset." The foundation also provides meals for the students and their mentors are constantly present to work with the students. "Some students left the program not to come back, but I persisted and it had its effect on my life in a very positive way. It showed me the right direction and I see that others are disoriented in life while I am happy. I took another path." She achieved diplomas of certified leadership courses which are internationally acknowledged and doors were opened to her that she did not imagine could happen in her life before. "This organization is great because youngsters teach youngsters. They are training them to be leaders and help other teens which is effective because I relate way



Happy Community Initiative supports qualified after-school programs

"This program helped me in everything, it built me strong"

more easily to someone of my age than an older person telling me what to do."

She has been with the foundation for four years, now. "They completely changed my life with this program. Every day you need to evaluate your day and think of what you did that makes you a better person. I analyze much more now and think of what I say before speaking." To work in a team is another important asset she has learned. "I was pretty dominant and because I am creative, I most times took everything in my hand. I have learned to share responsibilities now and leave space for others. It helps me in everything, it built me strong!"

Her advice to other young people is to accept your flaws. Be open to help that is being offered. "Many times our parents say they do not want the same life for you as they had and want something better. Listen to them, they say it out of love. Do not hide in stubbornness and rebellion. Strive to better yourself." □



Our Newest Column is All about YOUTH and Happiness

ORANJESTAD — Our newest column Happy Community Initiative is published bi-weekly on Thursdays in Aruba Today. We inform you about this dynamic, new projects from a different angle to give you a complete feel, so follow us and stay engaged!



The Happy Community Initiative is a visitor charity program that you can help strengthen Aruba's community by donating to good causes. CEDE Aruba, a dynamic community foundation, the Aruba Timeshare Association (ATSA), the Aruba Tourism Authority and several companies collaborate in this platform for visitors who would like to make a donation, but also volunteer in the future. The priority is set to support projects for Aruban youths. CEDE Aruba will make sure that the donations reach meaningful projects of local non-profits, based upon quality and transparency of finances of the offered programs. In this manner, you can be assured that your donation will reach its goal! With your donation, you support Aruban children with after school programs, mentorship activities and social support. You can donate at the kiosks in the lobby of several hotels (Costa Linda, Playa Linda, Casa del Mar, Paradise Beach Villas and La Cabana) or you can donate on the website: <https://happycommunityaruba.org/donate>. Goal is to raise \$110K to set up the program, at this moment \$4227.00 is collected. Help us reach our goal!

Pilot project of the Aruba Tourism Authority

First group of the Aruba Quality Seal (AQS) is certified



ORANJESTAD — Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A.) acknowledges the necessity of always being a step ahead in order for Aruba to remain competitive in the international market. Therefore A.T.A. took the initiative to start a certification program for local businesses.

What is Aruba Quality Seal - AQS?

The Aruba Quality Seal

program is designed to promote and measure the quality of the product and service provided by local businesses with the purpose for them to surpass their expectations to their consumers. A.T.A. trusts that AQS will be a tool for development and help to improve the level of professionalism and standards in our tourism industry. QESH Services, a local certified business, established on



the island for over 25 years, was in charge of this pilot project and also served as an advisor to guarantee an integral and productive project.

During the investigative and collective phase of this program a total of 12 international programs were evaluated. Different dialogs with experts and potential participants took place in order to develop a

list of criteria which are applicable to the Aruba Quality Seal. This criteria will be used to check the different businesses.

During the pilot phase, which had a duration of 10 months, a total of 14 companies in the sectors of retail, restaurants and activities participated. More sectors will be added in the future. The Aruba Quality Seal program consist of an online/digital platform in order to facilitate the process which makes it easier to register, participate and receive guidance.

gram. These are just a few of the benefits when taking part in the Aruba Quality Seal program.

Certified businesses of the pilot project

During a special ceremony of this pilot project different companies received their certification.

Certified restaurants: Que Pasa - Gianni's & Azia - Westdeck - One Happy Bowl

Certified shops: Cosecha - Aruba Aloe - Maggy's Store - Rage Silver

Certified Tour Operators: Clear Kayak - Red Sail Sport - Fofoti - Kinikini - Balashi Brewery Tour

Travel Tips

Aeropuerto Internacional
Reina Beatrix
ARUBA AIRPORT AUTHORITY N.V.

- When checking-in, you will always need your valid passport, along with your ticket, e-ticket receipt or e-ticket confirmation. For some countries a Visa is also required.
- For all US-bound departures, check-in three hours before your scheduled departure time.
- For all US-bound flights, after check-in, leave building through the exit on the left side of building; follow the signs and head towards local immigrations, main security screening, shopping area and the departure gates. Aruba Airport provides full US Pre-Clearance service.
- For all Non US departures, check-in may vary between airlines and destinations; always consult your airline for more information. Being at the airport 3 hours before your departure flight is always safe.
- For all Non US flights, after check-in, leave building through the exit on the right side of building; follow the signs and head towards Local immigrations, main security screening, shopping area and the departure gates.
- If traveling with a carry-on, there are restrictions on liquids, gels and aerosols you can carry in your carry-on luggage. Always check with your airline on limitations.
- Always check the weight limit of your baggage; excess weight may result in penalty fees.
- Always label your bags and suitcases with your name, address and phone number.
- Always leave all carry-on items unlocked while passing through screening points to not cause delays if these need to be inspected.
- Avoid wearing big belt buckles, clothing with metal buttons, lots of jewelry etc. when traveling. If you have these on, remove all metal items and place these in a tray for screening. It is advisable to put all metal items in your carry-on luggage until you clear security. This will help speed up the process.
- Remove shoes at checkpoint and place in tray for x-ray machine screening.
- All electronic items should be placed in tray outside their case for x-ray screening.
- Avoid packing foods and beverages in your check-in baggage. When traveling to the US, you have to comply with the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. More information <https://www.usda.gov/>.
- If traveling with medication, please pack these in your carry-on luggage in their original packaging.
- If you medical documentation, present this to the security checkpoint screener to inform them. The documentation is not required and will not exempt you from the screening process.
- Take note of inadmissible items such as sharp objects, sporting goods, guns and firearms, martial arts and self-defense items, tools, explosive materials, flammable items, disabling chemicals and other items when traveling. More information available on www.airportaruba.com.

What are the benefits of such program for a business?

Some of the benefits for businesses which successfully completed this certification is that consumers will be more satisfied with the service they will receive and they will have more trust in the business since they are operating according to certain standards and compliances. Businesses may also experience an increase in their income and more stability and the employees moral will increase.

An international program of this style is normally very expensive but A.T.A. made it possible to subsidize the majority of this program. Besides maintaining the cost low for the businesses they also offer incentives and discounts to participating companies. AQS will promote these certified companies on different platforms in order to add more value to the pro-

"Additional to the Aruba Quality Seal the Aruba Tourism Authority as 'Destination Marketing and Management Organization' of Aruba is proud to also count with two programs directed to increase the level of service which are the Happy Information Officers (HIO) and the Aruba Certification Program (ACP), both resembling under the Aruba Excellence Foundation. These are all instruments that contribute to a qualitative experience of our destination", says Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes, CEO of A.T.A..

A.T.A. would like to thank everyone who made this program possible and also would like to encourage local companies to join in this program that focuses on the quality, dedication and service offered to your customers. More information on this program can be found at www.aqs.aw. □

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Plastic ban: the law has passed

ORANJESTAD —The island's government made a decision in 2017 to ban all single use plastic bags and has now extended it to include items as plastic cups and straws and Styrofoam boxes, such as disposable coolers. Also, sunscreens containing oxybenzone is to be prohibited in Aruba. The ban is effective in 2019, with a one-year transition period to a total ban in 2020. The Plastic Ban Ordinance will go into effect as of July 1st 2020, together with the list of products that are prohibited.

The ordinance:

The government of Aruba together with Entities of the private sector of Aruba Endorsement

Considering:

- The increased environmental challenges the world is facing as well as Aruba;

- The UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), especially SDG's 12,13,14 and 15;
- focused on the importance of responsible consumption, safeguarding of oceans and terrestrial areas as well as climate action;
- The importance of the protection of Aruba's coral reefs and marine life, greatly under pressure due to increased human activity;
- The importance of sustainable business practices in order to safeguard Aruba's economy,
- environment and the well-being of its citizens;
- The leadership role the private sector of Aruba has taken regarding the sector's contribution towards combatting plastic pollution and



the degradation of Aruba's natural resources;

- The importance of cross-sector collaboration for solving societal and environmental matters;
- The government's ambition to fortify and instill a sense of pride, love and ownership within all individuals that live or visit Aruba and to further evoke the realization that there is only one Aruba

Decide:

To endorse the law banning the use of single use plastics and Oxybenzone (Landsverordening verbod op voor het milieu schadelijke producten) and to stimulate constructive and continuous dialogue as well as awareness regarding sustainable business practices.

GOA & Private Sector endorsement

This endorsement does not, nor is it intended to, create any binding, legal obligations under domestic or international law. Signed in Aruba on 27 November 2019.

What type of products are prohibited?

- Single use plastic bags with any type of handle;

Continued on Page 16

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Bijoux Terner Boutique | R-Glass
Curated Lab | Hungry Piranha
The Lazy Lizard | The Market
Shalom Body & Soul Spa



Plastic ban: the law has passed

Continued from Page 15

- Single use plastic bags in supermarkets to pack fruit and vegetables;
- Single use plastic cutlery;
- Single use plastic/styrofoam cups; Single use plastic stirrers; Single use plastic straws;
- Single use plastic/styrofoam plates;
- Single use plastic/styrofoam containers used for immediate consumption like fast food containers;
- Suntan lotion/cream with Oxybenzone; Biodegradable products not mentioned in the list of exempted products.

What type of single use products exempt until further notice?

- Single use plastic straw for medical use;
- Single use plastic/styrofoam recipient for cold cuts and raw meats;
- Saran wrap; Plastic lids (non plastic/styrofoam/biodegradable) on allowed containers/cups; Plastic food packages used for prepackaging products by local food manufactures for whole sale, their products fall under the exemption in 'deel A & B - indicated as "drankverpakkingen, borden en zakjes en wikkels die voedingsmiddelen bevatten";

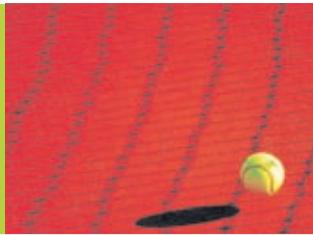


What is the scope of the prohibition?

- Import of the prohibited products;

- Manufacturing of the prohibited products;
- Sale of the prohibited products;
- To offer of the prohibited products; □

SPORTS



Los Angeles Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard, right, shoots over Orlando Magic forward Aaron Gordon during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020. The Clippers won 122-95.

Associated Press

Leonard scores 32 as Clippers beat Magic 122-95

By DOUG PADILLA
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Adept at operating at whatever gear his team needs, Kawhi Leonard has been in selfish mode of late, and the Los Angeles Clippers are better for it.

Leonard scored 32 points, Montrezl Harrell had 21 and the Clippers beat the Orlando Magic 122-95 on Thursday night.

Leonard also had five rebounds and five assists in his fourth consecutive game with at least 30 points. He was 12 for 20 from the field. Leonard's adaptive nature is why the Clippers were willing to throw more than \$100 million his way for the next three seasons.

Finding a player that has the ability to be the best in the league at whatever mode he chooses does not come cheap.

"It's not hard for him; it would be hard for me and most other players," Clippers head coach Doc Rivers said.

Continued on Page 22

LEADER OF THE PACK



Who matches up best in yet another Packers-49ers title game?

Green Bay Packers' Aaron Rodgers celebrates with Aaron Jones (33) after a touchdown run during the first half of an NFL divisional playoff football game against the Seattle Seahawks Sunday, Jan. 12, 2020, in Green Bay, Wis.

Associated Press
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Canada's Eugenie Bouchard serves to Italy's Martina Trevisan during their women's singles qualifying match for the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Friday, Jan. 17, 2020.

Associated Press

Bouchard's bid for Australian Open spot ends in qualifying

By JOHN PYE
AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— It was in the shadows of the main show courts at Melbourne Park, days before the first Grand Slam tournament of the season is set to begin in earnest, and Eugenie Bouchard's stay at the Australian Open was over in the last round of qualifying.

The 2014 Wimbledon runner-up, once as high as No. 5 in the rankings, has had a long slide down to No. 211. She's had to get used to playing away from packed stadium courts. But a constant echo around the arena on Friday presented something new.

The 25-year-old Canadian survived nearly three hours against China's You Xiaodi in heavy smoke and haze in the first round of qualifying and advanced through a second-rounder against Maddison Inglis in 65 minutes. With a spot in the main draw on the line, though, Bouchard lost 6-4, 6-3 to Martina Trevisan, a 26-year-old Italian who now will make her debut at a Grand Slam tournament. "Super tough," Bouchard said of the loss. "It's last round of qualies. I felt like I was close."

Bouchard lost seven straight games from 4-4 in the first set before she rallied and got back to 5-3 in the second, getting plenty of encouragement from a small but supportive crowd. Trevisan held her composure, though, and closed with an ace.

Bouchard said the changing wind and left-handed Trevisan's different spin were tricky. But one distraction, she said, was just odd. Every hit of the ball, every noise the players made, could be heard again a half-beat later.

After the third game, Bouchard went to chair umpire Carlos Bernades to talk about the noise.

"I said, 'I don't know if it's a speaker, or a TV or what, but I can hear our match, like, half a second after. In the point, I hear us grunting during the point,'" she said. "It was weird."

The echo — from a giant TV somewhere behind the arena — continued until match point. Still, there's plenty she's experiencing now as she tries to work her way back. She's prepared to deal with it.

"Well, life is not a straight line upward," she said. "I just take the good with the bad. Sometimes you've just

got to put your head down and grind, so that's what I'm trying to do."

In 2014, Bouchard reached a career-high No. 5 ranking after making the semifinals at the Australian Open and French Open and losing the Wimbledon final to Petra Kvitova.

She made it to the quarterfinals in Australia in 2015 and was into the fourth round at the U.S. Open that September, but had to withdraw because of a concussion she sustained after slipping and falling on wet locker room floor.

She reached a settlement with the United States Tennis Association in 2018 but her ranking has continued to fall. Her health and fitness, she said, are improving. "Generally I feel good. Today ... I felt slow and I didn't feel that great on court," Bouchard said. "One of those days when I feel like things weren't working. I didn't feel like my usual self on court. But overall, I feel good."

The smoke that blew over Melbourne earlier in the week caused some of the worst air quality measured in the world on Tuesday, sparking complaints and health concerns from players. □



Driver Carlos Sainz, of Spain, center, is lifted by Driver Stéphane Peterhansel, of France, center and left, and driver Nasser Al-Attiyah, of Qatar, center and right, at the end of stage twelve of the Dakar Rally between Haradh and Qiddiya, Saudi Arabia, Friday, Jan. 17, 2020.

Associated Press

Sainz wins a third Dakar Rally title, rider Brabec his first

QIDDIYA, Saudi Arabia

(AP) — Carlos Sainz confirmed his third Dakar Rally triumph on Friday after ensuring defending champion Nasser Al-Attiyah didn't escape in the Saudi desert.

Sainz stayed within minutes of Al-Attiyah's dust on the 12th and last stage, a 167-kilometer route from Haradh to Qiddiya. Al-Attiyah, second overall, earned his first stage win of this Dakar but Sainz finished four minutes back in sixth to secure the car title beside his victories in 2010 and 2018. All three were in different cars but with the same co-driver, Lucas Cruz. Sainz won by six minutes over Al-Attiyah, and 10 minutes over Mini teammate Stephane Peterhansel. The trio, who share 19 Dakar wins, had been vying for the lead among themselves since Stage 4. Sainz led from Stage 3.

"I feel very happy," Sainz said. "There's a lot of effort behind this. A lot of training, practice, physically, with the team. ... We started winning this Dakar on day one and we have gone flat out from the beginning."

The Spaniard's lead was reduced to 24 seconds by Tuesday, but navigation errors by Al-Attiyah and Peterhansel on

Wednesday gave Sainz an 18-minute buffer he used to cruise to the end. "We did a good job to finish second even though we wanted to win," Qatar's Al-Attiyah said. "We made two or three mistakes along the way and had loads of punctures, but I'm rather happy. I'm coming back to win next year. I just needed a bit more luck."

Peterhansel completed his 31st Dakar on the podium for the 16th time. The Frenchman has won it a record 13 times, and added four stage wins to extend that record to 80. "The four specials are a nice consolation prize, it's always nice to win," Peterhansel said. "It proves we've still got the mojo and raw speed."

Former Formula One champion Fernando Alonso finished 13th on his first Dakar. Motorbike rider Ricky Brabec became the first American champion in Dakar history, followed soon after by compatriot Casey Currie in the SSV lightweight cars category. Brabec on a Honda ended 18 years of KTM dominance. Rather than take it easy with a comfortable lead, he went all out to win the last stage and finished second to Jose Ignacio Cornejo of Chile by 53 seconds. □

Rickie Fowler, Scottie Scheffler tied for lead in desert

By JOHN NICHOLSON

AP Sports Writer

LA QUINTA, Calif. (AP) — Rickie Fowler came to The American Express for the first time in six years to prepare for the next two weeks at Torrey Pines and TPC Scottsdale.

He's ahead of schedule, shooting an 8-under 64 on Friday at PGA West's Jack Nicklaus Tournament Course for a share of the second-round lead with Scottie Scheffler.

In position to make the trip over the hill to San Diego and Torrey Pines with his sixth PGA Tour title and first since Phoenix a year ago, Fowler set up shop last week at the nearby Madison Club after tying for fifth at Kapalua in the Sentry Tournament of Champions.

"It was nice to get a little work in, get some good practice and play out here in the desert to get used to being back in the desert," said Fowler, who grew up about an hour away in Murrieta. "It's been very beneficial. I looked at that as something that was going to be the best opportunity for me to go into this West Coast swing to get the game where I want to and to play well."

He opened with a 65 on Thursday at La Quinta Country Club. "These courses are scorable, but I feel like it's a fine line between playing well out here and kind of scraping by," Fowler said. "If you drive it well and hit good approach shots, you can make a lot of birdies, but if you're a little off you're kind of scrambling for par. I feel like I've done a good job of just kind of picking my way around the two golf courses so far."

He played his final nine in 6-under 30, making a 6-foot eagle putt on the par-5 fourth, four birdies and two big par saves on Nos. 6 and 7.

"It's always nice when you don't give shots back, especially in a tournament like this where typically the scores are going to be on the lower side," Fowler said. "Bogey almost feels like you're giving two shots back." At 15-under 129,

he had the lowest 36-hole score of his PGA Tour career. Playing in the same third of the field as Fowler in the pro-am event, Scheffler also opened with rounds of 65 and 64. He birdied the first four holes and six of the first seven Friday, then rebounded from a double bogey on the par-4 18th with an eagle and two birdies in his second nine. "Wish the double wasn't in there, but it was still a very good score," Scheffler said. "I feel like I've been playing pretty well, just doing a good job managing my game, giving myself a lot of looks. I got off to a pretty hot start today and kept playing pretty solid, even after that double on 18, just staying in a good place mentally and was able to hit some good shots."

The 23-year-old former University of Texas star is in his first season on the PGA Tour after winning twice and topping the Korn Ferry Tour Finals and overall points lists. Fowler and Scheffler will play PGA West's Stadium Course — also the site of the final round — on Saturday.

Tournament host Phil Mickelson needed a low round Saturday at the Stadium Course to make the cut after rounds of 70 and 72 in his first start of the year.

Andrew Landry was a stroke out of the lead after a 64 at La Quinta.

Tony Finau, at No. 15 in the world the top-ranked player in the field, made a big move with a 62 on the Nicklaus layout. Playing alongside Mickelson, Finau was two strokes back at 13 under after the best round of the first two days. He played his final nine in 7-under 29.

"The putter got hot for me on that back nine," Finau said. "I hit it really nicely yesterday. I didn't feel like I got what I wanted out of the round and I wanted to change that today. I hit it well again and I was able to make some putts and just get some momentum." Defending champion Adam Long was 5 under after a 70 on the Nicklaus Course. □



Rickie Fowler hits from the 12th tee during the second round of The American Express golf tournament on the Nicklaus Tournament Course at PGA West on Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, in La Quinta, Calif.

Associated Press

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Calmer McGregor: Irish star returns vs Cerrone at UFC 246

By GREG BEACHAM

AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Conor McGregor became a two-division UFC champion because he was a tremendous fighter. He became the biggest mixed martial artist in the world only because he talked an even bigger game.

McGregor's loquacious, pugnacious personality was an enormous factor in his rise to previously unattainable heights in this still-young sport. Delivering ridiculous boasts and delectably profane insults with a charming Irish lilt, he needed less than five years to propel himself from low-profile shows in Dublin to UFC dominance and the unprecedented payday of his boxing match with Floyd Mayweather.

But after three rough years inside and outside the cage, McGregor has changed his public approach to his profession for his comeback fight in Las Vegas this week.

He has promoted his meeting with Donald "Cowboy" Cerrone at UFC 246 on Saturday night with compliments for his opponent mixed with humble self-effacement. Now a father of two, McGregor (21-4) claims he is calmer and more centered than the rampaging superstar who has had more arrests (at least three) than sporting victories (zero) since 2016.

"Sometimes it's tough, but I'm very grateful for the position I'm in," McGregor said. "I'm very grateful for the support I have with the people. If I keep my focus right and my positivity sharp and keep the people who I respect around me, I will overcome all of that." The world will soon find out whether McGregor is the same fighter now that his trash talk has been recycled into good vibes.

The Budweiser-drinking, Harley-riding Cerrone (36-13) has never been big on verbal competition during his 14-year professional MMA career, anyway. He is more interested in standing in the center of the cage and trading shots with Mc-



Conor McGregor, left, and Donald "Cowboy" Cerrone pose for photographers during a news conference for a UFC 246 mixed martial arts bout, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

Gregor — and the Irish ex-champion says he is eager to play that game.

Cerrone once shared the MMA world's dismissiveness of the brash slugger from Ireland — or England, as Cerrone once thought during a memorable exchange five years ago in which the 6-foot-1 Cerrone criticized the 5-foot-9 McGregor for moving up to lightweight.

They're meeting Saturday as welterweights, a full 15 pounds above lightweight. McGregor has long since earned Cerrone's respect by "doing exactly what he said he was going to do."

"He grew the sport so well," Cerrone said. "The dude is

a superstar. He brings a lot of eyes, a lot of attention. ... He has such an awesome platform. Why not be a good role model? Why not be a good person? It's the same thing I've been preaching the whole time. It's good to see him taking the right path. I like it."

McGregor's fans will soon decide whether they like it as well. McGregor and Cerrone are the main event and easily the biggest attraction at UFC 246, a rare marquee show in January in the promotion's hometown. The UFC typically holds its biggest Vegas shows in December and March, but they slipped another event into

T-Mobile Arena when McGregor chose this date for his return.

The UFC 246 card's penultimate bout features bantamweights Holly Holm and Raquel Pennington in a rematch of their meeting five years ago. Heavyweight Alexei Oleinik, lightweight Anthony Pettis and blue-chip flyweight prospect Maycee Barber also are on the show.

McGregor's new outlook is fairly shocking behavior from a fighter who verbally goaded Jose Aldo into making a decisive mistake to begin McGregor's 13-second knockout victory in 2015. McGregor tried similar manipulations

against Mayweather and Khabib Nurmagomedov in recent years, but both champions handled him with ease.

McGregor likely knows those tactics have no prayer of working against Cerrone, whose fighting ego is fully subsumed by his desire to get money for beer and jet ski fuel. Cerrone said he is getting the biggest payday of his career in his 51st professional fight. Instead, both fighters are likely to engage in a striking contest until one of them goes down. Cerrone has been stopped in his last two fights, but he still possesses enough punching power and kickboxing skill to concern any opponent, including McGregor and his tough chin.

McGregor claims he allowed the UFC to choose Cerrone as his opponent, and the two well-known veterans should make a surefire combination for pay-per-view success.

Although his tone is decidedly less boastful than in past years, McGregor is confident about victory followed by a quick return to the cage after three years of near-inactivity.

"I'm coming back in fresh, prepared and ready to compete," McGregor said. "It does not matter who my opponent is this week, and it does not matter who my next opponent is. It's going to be a big fight no matter what." □

Grasso misses weight, bout with Gadelha canceled at UFC 246

By GREG BEACHAM

AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Strawweight contender Cláudia Gadelha's bout with Alexa Grasso on the pay-per-view portion of the UFC 246 card has been canceled after Grasso badly missed weight.

The Nevada State Athletic Commission made the decision Friday morning after Grasso weighed in at 121 1/2 pounds, missing the strawweight allowance by 5 1/2 pounds.

The bout has been replaced on the pay-per-view card by bantamweight veteran Brian Kelleher's bout with Jamaica's Ode Osbourne. Kelleher (19-10) and Osbourne (7-2) had been previously scheduled for the second fight of the entire show.

Because Gadelha made weight at 115 1/2 pounds, the weight difference between the competitors was too big to allow the fight to go on with a financial penalty for Grasso

(11-3). Strawweight fighters must be only 3 pounds apart at the weigh-in to allow such a consideration, according to the commission.

"I worked so hard for this and I was so excited to put in a show for you all tomorrow," Gadelha wrote on her Instagram page. "We will run it back!"

Gadelha (17-4), who was slightly favored over Grasso by oddsmakers, fought for the strawweight title in 2016. The Brazilian vet-

eran has won four of her six bouts since, including a victory over Randa Markos last July in Las Vegas in her most recent action.

Grasso also missed weight for a bout against Markos in August 2017. She has lost two of her last three fights, including a decision loss to Carla Esparza last September in her native Mexico.

Gadelha and Grasso were scheduled for the second fight on the five-bout main card at T-Mobile Arena. □

Rodgers-Sherman matchup highlights NFC title game

By JOSH DUBOW

AP Pro Football Writer

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP)

— Nine years into his career and a little more than two years removed from a debilitating torn Achilles injury, Richard Sherman is still tormenting quarterbacks on a weekly basis.

Just ask Kirk Cousins.

Sherman had his third career playoff interception last week in a victory over Cousins and the Minnesota Vikings that has sent the San Francisco 49ers into the NFC championship game against the Green Bay Packers.

Waiting for Sherman will be the same quarterback he faced the last time he made it to the conference title game five years ago in Aaron Rodgers for the latest matchup between two of the NFL's best who have nothing but respect for each other.

"He's a talented player. In my opinion, never lost it," said Rodgers, who was intercepted by Sherman in that loss in the NFC title game following the 2014 season.

"I mean there was never a time where you are playing him where you were thinking, 'Oh, I am going to go after this guy.' I always think you have to be smart about what routes you like to throw on him and understand that he's one of the headiest players that has ever played that position, so you've got to be real smart about the types of routes you are liking on that side of the field."

Sherman once again looks like the same player he



In this Nov. 24, 2019, file photo, San Francisco 49ers cornerback Richard Sherman, left, greets Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers after an NFL football game in Santa Clara, Calif.

Associated Press

was during his heyday in Seattle when he repeatedly erased receivers from the game plan by shutting down nearly half of the field with his lock-down coverage.

In his past 13 games, Sherman has allowed only 17 catches for 130 yards with two interceptions and no touchdowns, according to Pro Football Focus.

Sherman also sounds like the same one as well, with his brash talk and extreme confidence that has helped a former fifth-round pick develop into one of the top cornerbacks to play the game.

"Since I got in the league, every category that matters to a corner, I'm No. 1 in: Completion percentages, interceptions, touchdowns against, yards, passer rating," he said. "If that was any other corner, it

wouldn't even be a conversation. But I just get tired of it. In the playoffs, I played in 13 games now, zero touchdowns given up, three interceptions. Like, show me somebody else doing it like that. Then I'll enjoy the argument. But there isn't."

While Sherman uses any slights, real or perceived, as fuel, there's only praise and respect between Sherman and Rodgers.

The two split their previous eight meetings, although Sherman came out ahead in the most important one when Seattle beat Green Bay in the NFC title game in January 2015.

But any success Rodgers had didn't come because he found some weakness in Sherman's game. Instead, he approached it as most quarterbacks do, throwing as few passes to his right as possible, knowing Sherman

will shut down that side of the field.

Rodgers has completed only 13 passes for 138 yards against Sherman in those eight games, according to SportRadar, targeting him just 23 times and throwing one interception in that NFC championship game. Much of that production came in the first meeting in 2012 when Rodgers went 4-for-5 for 44 yards. He has avoided him almost completely since then as Sherman has allowed just nine catches for 94 yards in the past seven games.

"I'd say it's been intense," Sherman said of those matchups. "It's been very competitive, I guess, for lack of better words. We've played quite a few times, and the games are always good. There's rarely any blowouts one way or another. But it's always a

chess match with him, and you've got to pick your spots carefully."

Sherman's spot figures to be on the left side of San Francisco's defense where he usually locks down whom-ever lines up against him.

The Packers having a clear No. 1 receiver in Davante Adams, whose 83 catches in the regular season were more than twice as many as any other wideout on Green Bay even though Adams missed four games with a toe injury. He had a franchise playoff record 160 yards receiving last week against Seattle, raising questions about whether the Niners will change philosophy and have Sherman follow Adams.

Sherman has lined up on the defensive right side on only 14 snaps in two seasons with San Francisco and said the last time he remembers trailing a receiver was probably in 2016 against Atlanta's Julio Jones.

It hasn't hurt the Niners, who allowed the fewest yards passing in 10 seasons.

"It just so happens we have the No. 1 pass defense in the league," Sherman said. "Whoa, oh, my God, it's crazy. It's crazy that you're not following anybody but somehow you have the No. 1 pass defense in the league, almost like our strategy works. It's almost like you're an idiot for doing it any other way. It's almost like you're dumb if you do it another way. It's almost like people have been saying, 'Do it this way' for so long, but they don't have the No. 1 defense, but whatever, I'm crazy." □

AP source: Giants hiring Garrett as offensive coordinator

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr.

AP Pro Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Jason Garrett is headed to the other side of the Giants-Cowboys rivalry.

A person with direct knowledge of the decision says New York is hiring the former Dallas coach to be the Giants offensive coordinator. The person spoke to The Associated Press on

condition of anonymity Friday night because the team did not immediately announce the move.

ESPN first reported the hiring of Garrett by the Giants to join new coach Joe Judge's staff.

Garrett was told Jan. 5 he was not being brought back by the Cowboys after coaching the team for the previous 9 1/2 seasons.

He took over in Dallas as the interim coach when Wade Phillips was fired halfway through the 2010 season and went 87-70, including the playoffs.

The 53-year-old Garrett had the club's second-longest tenure behind Pro Football Hall of Famer Tom Landry. Dallas finished 8-8 for the fourth time under Garrett this season. The

Cowboys opened 3-0 before dropping eight of 12 and losing control of their playoff fate. Dallas missed the playoffs six times in Garrett's nine full seasons. Garrett wasn't out of a job for long as Judge made his highest-profile hiring since joining the Giants on Jan. 8. Garrett gives Judge, a first-time NFL head coach, a veteran assistant on his

staff. Garrett will also be tasked with helping develop quarterback Daniel Jones, who showed lots of promise in his rookie season after taking over from Eli Manning as the starter. Jones threw for 3,027 yards and a franchise rookie record 24 touchdowns with 12 interceptions in 13 games, including 12 starts. □

Virtanen, Markstrom lead Canucks over Coyotes 3-1

By The Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) —

Jake Virtanen borrowed a move from his Western Hockey League days — and it helped lift the Vancouver Canucks to victory.

Virtanen scored the go-ahead goal midway through the second period and Jacob Markstrom made 34 saves to lead the Canucks past the Arizona Coyotes 3-1 on Thursday night.

With the score tied at 1 and the puck on his stick with just under five minutes left in the period, Virtanen went to something that worked

when he played with the Calgary Hitmen. He took a pass from J.T. Miller and swooped behind the Arizona net before backhanding a shot that hit goaltender Adin Hill's left skate and bounced into the net.

"I saw the goalie overcommit a little bit," said the right wing who scored his 14th goal of the season, one less than his career high set last year. "I took a quick glance up.

"In junior (league), I used to do that wraparound move.

I thought I would try it out — and it worked."

Coyotes coach Rick Tocchet wasn't happy about the go-ahead goal.

"That goal was avoidable," he said. "It's just a nothing play. We had the puck and that was the difference in the game."

Bo Horvat also scored and Tanner Pearson had an empty-net goal for the Canucks, who won for the 10th time in 13 games.

Markstrom, who made his 16th start in 18 games, made a right-pad save on Jason Demers late in the third period to preserve the win.

Vancouver's victory made an already tight Pacific Division even closer. Arizona and Calgary are tied with 57 points, Vegas and Vancouver are next with 56, while Edmonton is one behind them.

"It's a game of inches right now in the standings and on the ice," said Horvat, who has 13 points with six goals and seven assists in his last nine games. "It's going to be like that from here on out. We have to keep winning hockey games if



Vancouver Canucks right wing Jake Virtanen (18) slips a shot past Arizona Coyotes goaltender Adin Hill (31) for a goal during the second period of an NHL hockey game Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Associated Press

we are going to stay in it." Christian Dvorak scored for the Coyotes, who are 1-3-1 over their last five games. Adin Hill, making his third straight start, made 22 saves.

Virtanen goal was his 14th of the season, one less than his career high set last year, but gave him a career-best 26 points in just 48 games this year. He had 25 in 70 games last season.

"It's nice, (but) I don't really look at it like that," he said. "I want to keep going and

keep producing for our team. We want to make the playoffs, so whatever I can do."

A defensive miscue set up the Coyotes' opening goal at 7:59. When Vancouver defenseman Tyler Myers failed to clear a bouncing puck, Taylor Hall found Dvorak in front of the net. He scored his 12th of the season with a low shot to the far side.

Vancouver made it 1-1 on a power play at 15:01. Rookie defenseman Quinn

Hughes boomed a shot from the blue line that Hill stopped only to have Horvat knock in the rebound. Horvat has 13 points (six goals, seven assists) in the last eight games.

"I thought it was a pretty solid game here for us, but there's no moral victories, especially at this time of year," Dvorak said. "It's a tough one to lose."

NOTES: Elias Pettersson had a pair of assists for the Canucks. ... Pearson's goal was the 100th of his career. □

Clippers

Continued from Page 17

"For him, he's so under control that nothing's going to speed him up. He can go fast when he wants to. We have figured out how to take advantage of that better and it's been great for us."

Leonard's four consecutive offensive-minded games have coincided with Paul George's absence because of a strained left hamstring. The Clippers not only improved to 11-1 when Leonard scores 30 or more points, he is the first Clippers player with four consecutive games of at least 30 since Elton Brand in 2006. "I'm just making shots, my teammates are being aggressive and they

are getting me open shots as well," Leonard said. "It's just creating a chain reaction and we're all playing hard on defense. We're able to get out in transition."

The Clippers placed seven players in double figures and led by many as 23 in their fourth win in five games. Landry Shamet scored 13 points, and Ja'Mychal Green finished with 11 points and 13 rebounds. Nikola Vucevic had 22 points and nine rebounds and Aaron Gordon scored 20 points, but the Magic were unable to keep up with the Clippers while playing in Los Angeles for the second time in two nights. Orlando ended the Lakers' nine-game



Orlando Magic center Mo Bamba fouls Los Angeles Clippers forward Montrezl Harrell during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020. The Clippers won 122-95.

Associated Press

winning streak with a victory Wednesday.

Finding the same energy level simply proved too difficult for the Magic. "Look, you have to have the necessary intensity, purpose, attitude of play,

to win any night in this league, especially against a team as good as theirs," Magic head coach Steve Clifford said. "You have to be on it. I thought Aaron Gordon was terrific. Except for that ... "Our team, our

approach and our attitude has been a real strength all year. Tonight it was not."

The Magic are 2-1 during their current visit to California and the victories have been rewarding, the defeat will weigh heavily. Fittingly, the trip ends against Golden State on Saturday. A 3-1 run through the state should more than meet expectations for a team that has hit something of a groove with four victories in six games, even with Thursday's defeat. They have also won six of their last nine. "We didn't execute defensively," said Gordon, a native of San Jose. "We were scoring with them for a little bit of time but that's not really who we are. We're not going to out-score teams so we have to lock in defensively and we didn't do that." □

To stop sign stealing, MLB could fight tech with more tech

By DAVID BRANDT

AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — If Major League Baseball really wants to stop its teams from electronically stealing signs, it might consider fighting technology with more technology.

In a sport that's increasingly driven by analytics and advancements, the majority of signs between players and coaches are still transmitted by low-tech hand signals that have been used for decades. Those hand signals are easily captured by the loads of video equipment around MLB stadiums that are used for television, replays and all kinds of stat tracking.

All that technology can be — and obviously has been — used for cheating.

The Houston Astros were hit with stiff punishment on Monday after an MLB investigation found the team used electronics to steal signs during the franchise's run to the 2017 World Series title and again in the 2018 season. Manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow were suspended for a season and then fired by Astros owner Jim Crane.

Boston manager Alex Cora was fired on Tuesday for his involvement with the Astros' scheme and a separate ongoing investigation that involves the Red Sox. Considering those developments, it might be wise to save players and coaches from themselves.

A partial model is already in place: The NCAA's Southeastern Conference has used electronic communication between coaches and catchers during league games for the past two seasons, which allows the coach to talk strategy with the catcher through an earpiece. It's much like the NFL, where an offensive coach tells plays to a quarterback.

No hand signals needed.

"I don't know why everyone isn't doing it — it's fantastic," LSU coach Paul Mainieri said. "It allows the coach to speak directly to the catcher and speeds up the game." In the SEC's system, the catcher still has



In this Oct. 31, 2018, file photo, Boston Red Sox manager Alex Cora rides with the trophy during a parade in Boston to celebrate the team's World Series championship over the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Associated Press

to relay signs to the pitcher the old-fashioned way with hand signals, but Mainieri said there's no reason why pitchers couldn't eventually be included in the conversation. It's more common for coaches to call pitches in college, while catchers usually handle those responsibilities in the big leagues.

MLB expects to show players some prototypes of pitcher-catcher communication devices at spring training camps this year, but there are no plans to put any of them in place. It would be unrealistic for a big league catcher to talk with the pitcher with a batter standing right next to him. Ole Miss coach Mike Bianco said there could be ways to work around that problem, suggesting that a clicker or some other device could be employed.

Former MLB catcher Buck Martinez, who played 17 seasons, said the technology is available and today's generation of players would adapt to earpieces quickly if that's the route the sport wanted to take.

"I think most of these younger generation kids have earpieces in their ears most of the time anyway," Martinez said laughing, referencing the ubiquitous AirPods. "It's just normal. It would just be listening to

baseball instead of music." Under MLB's current setup, the sport has tried to draw a distinct line about what's allowed and what's not when it comes to sign stealing. It's a legal and time-honored part of baseball as long as it is done with the naked eye. Using technology is prohibited.

There's a wide variety of opinion about how much technological cheating is actually happening and how effective it can be. Arizona Diamondbacks general manager Mike Hazen said in November that he didn't think it was a widespread problem.

"I think MLB has done a really good job of cleaning up all of that stuff. It's been

a topic for a few years," Hazen said shortly after the news broke that the Astros were being investigated by MLB. "There's a lot of restrictions in place, there's a lot of guidance in the clubhouse, oversight, in a good way."

But the temptation is everywhere. There are ways to capture just about every movement on a baseball field. Teams measure everything from the launch angle of the baseball off a bat to the spin rate of a pitcher's breaking ball. Video is used to break down the minutiae of a pitcher's motion or a batter's swing in an effort to find any detail that could improve performance.

Computers are even being employed to call balls and strikes at lower levels of the sport and could be coming to the big leagues in the near future.

Yet signs from catcher to pitcher are often fairly easy to decipher, especially with the help of video.

Former big league pitcher Jay Powell, who played 11 seasons and was the winning pitcher in Game 7 of the 1997 World Series with the Marlins, said there would be plenty of logistics to sort out. Infielders might need earpieces, too, since they're often positioned according to the type and location of a pitch.

Still, it's certainly possible.

"It might actually speed up the game," Powell said. "If they ever went that route it would have to be similar how an offensive coordinator communicates with a quarterback — it's live for 10 seconds or five seconds and then it's cut off."

Martinez agreed that something similar might work. He said MLB could also limit access to replay rooms and make sure in-game video wasn't available to players and coaches until after the game.

The answers might not be simple, but the longtime catcher said they need to be found. Baseball should be decided between the players in the game, not by who has the best technology.

"You've got to keep it on the field," Martinez said. "There's no question." □

Rockies to honor Larry Walker by retiring his jersey number

DENVER (AP) — The Colorado Rockies will retire the jersey number of outfielder Larry Walker in a ceremony during the upcoming season.

The Rockies announced Friday they will honor Walker on April 19 when they play another one of Walker's former teams, the St. Louis Cardinals.

Walker's No. 33 will be displayed next to Todd Helton's No. 17 in the right-field area inside Coors Field, alongside the initials "KSM" for the Rockies' late president Keli McGregor.

"There is no bigger honor an organization can give a player than retiring his number," Walker said. "I can't tell you how tak-

en aback I am by this gesture. I am both thrilled and honored and I look forward to seeing my number hanging next to the greatest Rockie of all time, #17!"

There may be another upcoming honor for Walker, who's on the Hall of Fame ballot for the 10th and final time this year. The results of the vote will be announced Tuesday.

In parts of 10 seasons with Colorado, Walker hit .334 with 258 homers and 848 RBIs. He ranks first in team history in batting average, on-base percentage (.426) and slugging percentage (.618). He also won the 1997 NL MVP during a season in which he hit .366 with 49 homers. □

NBC hopes 'free' makes Peacock stand out in streaming era

By TALI ARBEL

AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — NBCUniversal is launching a new streaming service that will have a large part available for free, an approach it hopes will resonate with people who aren't interested in traditional TV.

The service, Peacock, will debut April 15 for customers of Comcast, NBCUniversal's parent company. Everyone else will get it July 15, just before the Olympics.

There's a free version, a \$5-a-month version with lots more stuff and a \$10 option to remove ads. The prices are in line with what many rival services charge. The \$5 version will be free for 24 million households that get TV subscriptions through Cox, or either TV or internet through Comcast. Those customers can pay \$5 a month to remove ads. NBCUniversal hopes to position Peacock as broader than the other major streaming services already out there. It will soon offer news, sports and reality TV along with shows and movies — just like a traditional broadcast TV network, but with fewer ads, at five minutes an hour.

"It's a smart move for them to try to pivot into a new space that hasn't really



The logo for NBCUniversal's upcoming streaming service, Peacock, is displayed on a computer screen on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020, in New York.

Associated Press

been tapped into yet," said Sarah Henschel, a media analyst for IHS Markit.

Peacock's stated ambitions for subscribers are, for now, smaller than those of rival Disney, however. And not everything is immediately going to Peacock. NBCUniversal will continue to send shows and movies it makes to other companies, too. The influx of new streaming services from the country's biggest tech and entertainment companies comes as people increasingly turn away from watching live network TV and cut their

cable subscriptions. These new offerings model themselves on Netflix: a catalog of movies and TV shows available whenever and wherever people want to watch, for a monthly fee. They'll have to fight for consumers' attention and money.

All the costs for streaming services add up, and surveys suggest people don't want to subscribe to all of them, especially with many existing streaming options already, including Netflix, Amazon Prime and Hulu. That's why NBCUniversal is

emphasizing that Peacock comes with a free option. Prices for rivals range from \$5 a month (Apple TV Plus and Quibi with ads) to \$15 (HBO Max).

Netflix's most popular plan costs \$13.

Hulu, in which Comcast is a silent minority owner for a few more years, also has ad and ad-free options, as will Quibi, an upcoming short-video streaming service that's backed by Hollywood studios. Apple TV Plus, Disney Plus and the upcoming HBO Max from AT&T's Warner Media don't have ads at all, though AT&T has talked about having some in the future. None of them has a free option the way Peacock will.

Peacock will have 15,000 hours of programming, including original content, stuff from the NBC library like "The Office," which leaves Netflix for Peacock in 2021, and shows from other studios, too, including "Two and a Half Men." Other standout shows and movies include "Jurassic Park," "E.T. the Extra Terrestrial," the "Law and Order" universe and "Keeping Up with the Kardashians." Not all of Peacock's videos will be exclusive.

Original shows will include a series based on a true-crime podcast that stars Alec Baldwin and Christian Slater. Peacock also plans

to remake sci-fi favorite "Battlestar Galactica."

And Michael Schur, the creator of "Parks and Recreation" and "The Good Place," is producing a comedy called "Rutherford Falls."

For TV shows in their first season, Peacock will let viewers watch episodes for free the day after they air. For shows that have been on longer, viewers will need to pay. The free version also offers only some of the episodes of original shows and classic favorites.

Paying subscribers will also get Premier League soccer matches unavailable on TV and late-night shows from Jimmy Fallon and Seth Meyers a few hours early.

The general launch is timed to the Olympics, which start July 24 in Tokyo. NBC televises them in the U.S.

Peacock will show the opening and closing ceremonies before they are televised in prime time. It will also have three daily shows with Olympics highlights and other features. NBCUniversal is making at least some of the Olympics available for free, but it didn't immediately say how much.

Media analyst Rich Greenfield said he considers Peacock a "digital version of a broadcast network" with a better consumer experience than traditional TV.

That recalls CBS All Access, which launched in 2014 and functions in some ways as a digital version of CBS. It remains a relatively small streamer.

Comcast will invest \$2 billion in Peacock in its first two years of operation, and it predicts losing money for years. It says it'll break even by the fifth year. It hopes to have 30 million to 35 million U.S. accounts by 2024, along with \$2.5 billion in revenue.

That's small compared with Disney Plus, which is targeting 60 million to 90 million worldwide subscribers for 2024. Comcast hopes to take Peacock international down the road as well and make it available to customers of other U.S. cable companies for free. □

UK psychiatric group cites social media dangers to the young

LONDON (AP) — Britain's Royal College of Psychiatrists is urging that mammoth tech companies like Facebook and Twitter turn over research about possible dangers caused to young people by excessive social media use.

The group also calls for higher rates of taxation on these companies, with some of the revenue to be used to fund more research into how some young people are being put at risk of self-harm, suicide and other severe mental health issues.

Dr. Bernadka Dubicka, leader of the group's fac-

ulty on adolescence, said Friday that she has seen in her practice an increase in self-harm among young people "as a result of their social media use and online discussions."

She said it will be impossible for researchers to understand the risks and benefits of social media use unless the major companies share their research data and help fund more inquiries.

The group of psychiatrists wants big tech companies taxed on their international turnover, with some of the money earmarked for mental health

research.

It said a proposed 2% tax on UK revenues is insufficient.

The father of Molly Russell, a 14-year-old girl who ended her life in 2017 in a case that attracted wide attention, said he supports the proposals.

Ian Russell said there is an "urgent need" for action to protect young people. He said he had "no doubt that social media helped kill my daughter," after finding "bleak depressive material, graphic self-harm content and suicide-encouraging memes" in her computer. □

For some major U.S. shippers, 2019 ended on a sour note

MICHELLE CHAPMAN and DAVID KOENIG
AP Business Writers

For major shipping companies dealing with trade wars and slowing global growth, conditions appear to have deteriorated for some as 2019 came to a close. Global shipping and logistics provider Expeditors International said Friday that it expects fourth quarter operating income to fall between \$177 million and \$183 million.

CEO Jeffrey Musser cited trade disputes and slowing growth for a number of economies. The report comes a day after the railroad CSX reported a 7% decline in the freight it hauled during the final months of the year. "We've seen impacts throughout the year from these market conditions, but the pace at which these changes occurred accelerated dramatically in the fourth quarter," Musser said. "We know this environment will change over time, as it always has in the past."

Shares of Expeditors International of Washington Inc., based in Seattle, slumped almost 5%.

Bruce Chan, an analyst at Stifel Nicolaus, said ocean-borne volumes and shipping rates have been weak for most of the past year but don't appear to be getting dramatically worse now.

The drop-off at Expeditors

may be isolated, Chan said. "It's a soft market and it has

the worst performers across the market in trading Friday. Shares in trucking, rail-

that its profit slid 40%, hurt by higher costs, a shorter holiday season and its

wrote David G. Ross, also with Stifel. "There is lots of hope in the stock market and the freight market for a better 2020, but the trends have yet to turn. Maybe with the January index readings? Doubtful, as the index (both shipments and expenditures) normally falls off sequentially from December to January."

The trade war between the U.S. and China has taken a toll. Government data showed Friday that China's economy grew by 6.1% last year, down from 6.6% in 2018, and a multi-decade low.

The Trump administration has agreed to cancel planned tariff hikes on additional Chinese imports as part of an interim deal announced this week, and Beijing promised to buy more American farm goods. Factories have seen less activity in the current economic environment, meaning that they have pulled back on shipments.

The Institute for Supply Management reported this month that its manufacturing index dropped to 47.2 in December, from 48.1 in November. That's the lowest level in more than a decade.

UPS reports fourth quarter and full-year results at the end of the month. Its shares have been falling over the past month, and are down in Friday trading. □



In this May 14, 2019 file photo, a Cosco Shipping container ship passes the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco bound for the Port of Oakland.

Associated Press

been, but I haven't seen any major negative inflection" on volumes or rates for shipping and airfreight, Chan said. "What's going on here is mostly related to how the company planned or budgeted for the fourth-quarter market environment and may have made a miscalculation" on how much capacity to lock down.

But there are signs that transportation companies are struggling.

The freight and logistics group contained some of

road and ocean shipping companies sold off. Expeditors competitor, Danish freight forwarder DSV, fell less than 1%. CH Robinson, a trucking company that has an ocean-shipping division, slid almost 3%. JB Hunt Transport Services Inc., a trucking company, on Friday reported profits that fell well short of what industry analysts had expected, according to a survey by Zacks Investment Research. Shares in that company are down 3.5%. FedEx reported last month

move to cut ties with Amazon.com. It too, cut its profit expectations.

The Cass Freight Shipments Index report, which monitors truck shipments in North America, showed shipments dropping 6.4% in December, and 7.9% from the same period the previous year.

"Both the shipments and expenditures components of the Cass Freight Index marked their lowest reading of 2019 and took another step backwards in terms of (year-over-year growth,"

Sales of flowers, pork push Dutch farm exports to new record

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Dutch agriculture exports rose 4.6% in 2019 from the previous year to a new record of 94.5 billion euros (\$105.2 billion), the country's statistics office and a research organization said Friday.

In this country famous for its colorful fields of tulips, horticultural products such as fresh flowers, bulbs and plants were the highest-value agricultural sector,

amounting to 9.5 billion euros.

Rising prices accounted for about two thirds of the increase, with growth in sales volumes making up the other third, the Central Bureau for Statistics and Wageningen Economic Research said.

Meat exports were second, weighing in at 8.8 billion euros, helped by soaring prices of pork sold to China. □

The rise was fueled by outbreaks of African swine fever in parts of Asia. Pig meat sales to China rose from 117 million euros in 2018 to an estimated 377 million euros in 2019, according to the research.

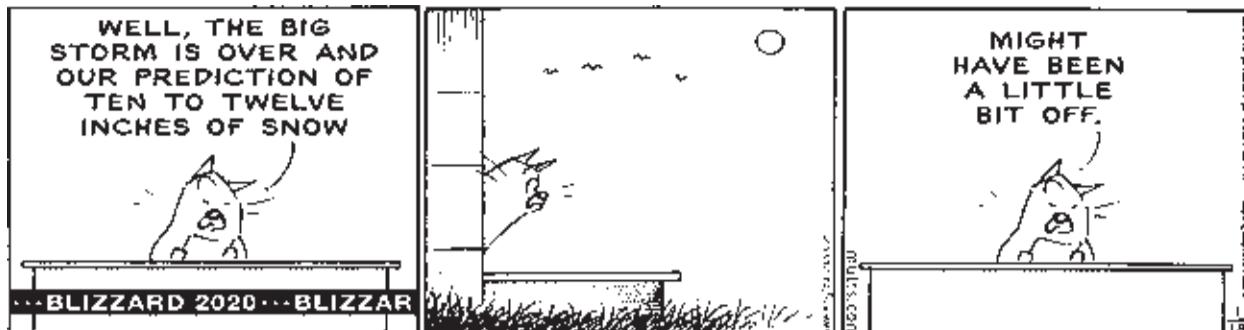
The Netherlands' eastern neighbor Germany remained the top market for exports, accounting for 25% of all sales, followed by Belgium and the United Kingdom. □



In this Friday, April 20, 2018 file image fields of flowers are left to bloom to cultivate the bulbs around spring garden de Keukenhof in Lisse, west central Netherlands.

Associated Press

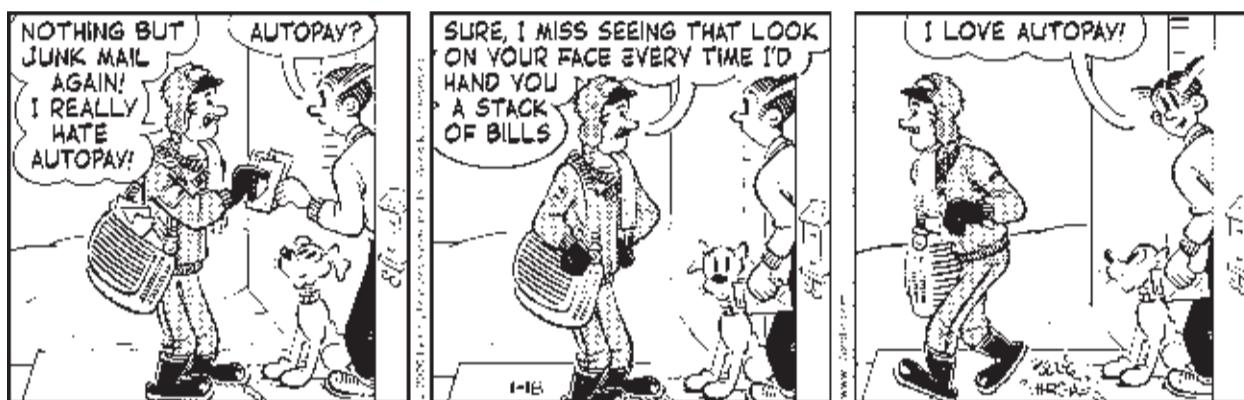
Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

2	3			2
7	9	6		3
3	4	7		5
			9	1
5		4	7	
1	6	8	4	
9		2		

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

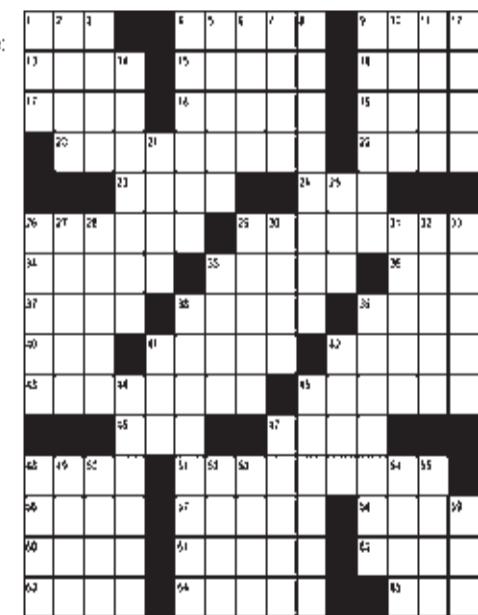
6	1	3	2	7	9	8	5	4
8	7	9	4	3	5	6	2	1
2	4	5	1	8	6	7	3	9
3	8	4	6	1	2	9	7	5
9	2	6	7	5	3	1	4	8
1	5	7	8	9	4	3	6	2
4	6	8	9	2	7	5	1	3
5	9	2	3	6	1	4	8	7
7	3	1	5	4	8	2	9	6

Yesterday's puzzle answer

6	1	3	2	7	9	8	5	4
8	7	9	4	3	5	6	2	1
2	4	5	1	8	6	7	3	9
3	8	4	6	1	2	9	7	5
9	2	6	7	5	3	1	4	8
1	5	7	8	9	4	3	6	2
4	6	8	9	2	7	5	1	3
5	9	2	3	6	1	4	8	7
7	3	1	5	4	8	2	9	6

ACROSS

- 1 for the course: **ROMA**
- 4 Chess pieces: **KNIGHT**
- 8 Cabbage concoction: **SLAW**
- 13 Victim or lira: **PERSECUTED**
- 15 Give care: **ATTEND**
- 16 Chicken or the Sea product: **SHRIMP**
- 17 Utensil's location: **SPATULA**
- 18 Enterprise: **ENTREPRENEUR**
- 19 Cat Herz: **HERZ**
- 20 Magnet material: **NEODYMIUM**
- 22 Bank teller's ca: **CASHIER**
- 23 Walk with heavy steps: **STRUT**
- 24 Battle-ax: **MAUL**
- 26 Agree to take: **ACCEPTE**
- 29 Shears: **SCISSORS**
- 34 Thick drinks: **COCKTAILS**
- 35 African nation: **ANGOLA**
- 36 Yearbook grade: **YEARBOOK**
- 37 Major leaguers: **PROS**
- 38 Human person: **PERSON**
- 39 VHT or CT: **CHT**
- 40 French article: **PIECE**
- 41 Framed pieces of glass: **FRAMES**
- 42 Prolonged quarrels: **FEUDS**
- 43 Item in a makeup bag: **ITEM**
- 45 Use heavy sandpaper: **SANDING**
- 46 Time again, repeatedly: **REPEATEDLY**
- 47 Short-necked duck: **DUCK**
- 48 Boston cracker: **CRACKER**
- 51 Attractives: **ATTRACTIVES**
- 56 Jumping off-ground activity: **SKIPPING**
- 57 Bedtimes: **BEDTIME**
- 58 One of Columbus' ships: **SHIP**
- 60 house: **RESIDENCE**
- 61 Lariat's loop: **NOOSE**
- 62 Annoying insect: **BITER**
- 63 Gauze: **NETTING**
- 64 City in the south of France: **PERPIGNAN**
- 65 Have debts: **INDEBTED**



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 1/17/20

DOWN

- 1 Energy: **POWER**
- 2 Lumberjack tools: **AXES**
- 3 Unusual: **STRANGE**
- 4 Colorful tropical bird: **PARROT**
- 5 of time: early: **EARLY**
- 6 Refuse to: **REFUSE**
- 7 Jet down: **CRASH**
- 8 Stockpiling: **STOCKPILE**
- 9 Hints like an injection do: **SHOTS**
- 10 Draw, attract: **ATTRACT**
- 11 As strong as: **STRONG**
- 12 Have a yen for: **LONGING**
- 14 Kermit & Miss Piggy: **SEASIDE**
- 21 Mon Bébé's range: **SPANISH**
- 25 As cute as button: **CUTE**
- 26 More than adequate: **EXTRA**
- 27 Mariah or Drew: **SHAW**
- 28 Glenn or Eric: **GLASS**
- 29 More cashflow: **INCOME**
- 30 Tin containers: **CANS**
- 31 Take place: **OCURRER**
- 32 The riot act to berates: **SCOLD**
- 33 In a sort of: **SOFTLY**
- 35 Key or Autry: **KEY**
- 36 Kerchief: **SCARF**
- 39 Crossing tightly: **CROCHET**
- 41 Brooch: **PIN**
- 42 Barn party: **FAIR**
- 44 Bemoan: deplore: **REGRET**
- 45 Discontinues: **DISCONTINUE**
- 47 Past, present or future: **PAST**
- 48 Cut short: **CUTSHORT**
- 49 Easy jail: **PRISON**
- 50 Makes for oil: **REFINERY**
- 52 Impoverished: **POOR**
- 53 Swimming spot: **POOL**
- 54 Spanish child: **SPANISH**
- 55 Chew like a beaver: **CHUBBY**
- 59 Consumed: **EATEN**

Friday's Puzzle Solved

D	E	S	E	S	S	A	S	S	T	A	N	
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Official says Phoenix Airport ride-hailing fee is illegal

By JONATHAN J. COOPER

PHOENIX (AP) — A new \$4 fee on Uber and Lyft rides to and from the Phoenix airport is "very likely" unconstitutional, the state attorney general said Thursday, upping the ante in the showdown that has led the ride-hailing giants to threaten to abandon the airport service.

The fees approved by the Phoenix City Council probably violated a 2018 ballot measure prohibiting higher taxes on services, Attorney General Mark Brnovich said. The Arizona Supreme Court will make a final determination on the issue. By law, Phoenix could lose its share of state revenue, a third of its general fund budget, if the fee hike is found to be illegal and isn't repealed by the city.

Lawyers for the city say the higher fees are not taxes on services, but rather permissible charges for businesses to use the city-owned Sky Harbor International Airport, one of the largest U.S. airports serving some 44 million passengers a year. The fees, the city argues, are akin to rent and landing fees charged to restaurants and airlines. □

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The map shows the following locations:

- Aruba Today: Located on Weststraat, near the intersection with Schelpstraat.
- Bondia: Located on Weststraat, near the intersection with Schelpstraat.
- Bus Terminal: Located on Weststraat, near the intersection with High Rise Hotel.
- High Rise Hotel: Located on Weststraat, near the intersection with Royal Plaza Mall.
- Royal Plaza Mall: Located on Weststraat, near the intersection with High Rise Hotel.
- L.G. Smith Boulevard: A major road running through the city.
- Downtown: The central business district of Aruba.

1st malaria vaccine tried out in babies in 3 African nations

By CARA ANNA and LAURAN NEERGAARD

Associated Press

TOMALI, Malawi (AP) — A pinch in the leg, a squeal and a trickle of tears. One baby after another in Malawi is getting the first and only vaccine against malaria, one of history's deadliest and most stubborn of diseases. The southern African nation is rolling out the shots in an unusual pilot program along with Kenya and Ghana. Unlike established vaccines that offer near-complete protection, this new one is only about 40% effective. But experts say it's worth a try as progress against malaria stalls: Resistance to treatment is growing and the global drop in cases has leveled off. With the vaccine, the hope is to help small children through the most dangerous period of their lives. Spread by mosquito bites, malaria kills more than 400,000 people every year, two-thirds of them under 5 and most in Africa.

Seven-month-old Charity Nangware received a shot on a rainy December day at a health clinic in the town of Migowi. She watched curiously as the needle slid into her thigh, then twisted up her face with a howl.

"I'm very excited about this," said her mother, Esther Gonjani, who herself gets malaria's aches, chills and fever at least once a year and loses a week of field work when one of her children is ill. "They explained it wasn't perfect, but I feel secure it will relieve the pain."

There is little escaping malaria -- "malungo" in the local Chichewa language -- especially during the five-month rainy season. Stagnant puddles, where mosquitoes breed, sur-



In this photo taken Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2019, health officials prepare to vaccine residents of the Malawi village of Migowi, where young children become test subjects for the world's first vaccine against malaria. Babies in three African nations are getting the first and only vaccine for malaria in a pilot program.

Associated Press

round the homes of brick and thatch and line the dirt roads through tea plantations or fields of maize and sugar cane.

In the village of Tomali, the nearest health clinic is a two-hour bike ride away. The longer it takes to get care, the more dangerous malaria can be. Teams from the clinic offer basic medical care during visits once or twice a month, bringing the malaria shot and other vaccines in portable coolers.

Treating malaria takes up a good portion of their time during the rainy season, according to Daisy Chikonde, a local health worker.

"If this vaccine works, it will reduce the burden," she said.

Resident Doriga Ephrem proudly said her 5-month-old daughter, Grace, didn't cry when she got the malaria shot.

When she heard about the vaccine, Ephrem said her

first thought was "protection is here." Health workers explained, however, that the vaccine is not meant to replace antimalarial drugs or the insecticide-treated bed net she unfolds every night as the sun sets and mosquitoes rise from the shadows.

"We even take our evening meals inside the net to avoid mosquitoes," she said.

It took three decades of research to develop the new vaccine, which works against the most common and deadly of the five parasite species that cause malaria. The parasite's complex life cycle is a huge challenge. It changes forms in different stages of infection and is far harder to target than germs.

"We don't have any vaccines against parasites in routine use. This is uncharted territory," said Ashley Birkett, who directs PATH's Malaria Vaccine Initiative, a nonprofit that helped drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline develop the shot, brand-named Mosquirix. The bite of an infected mosquito sends immature parasites called sporozoites into the bloodstream. If they reach the liver, they'll mature and multiply before spewing back into the blood to cause malaria's

debilitating symptoms. At that point, treatment requires medicines that kill the parasites.

Mosquirix uses a piece of the parasite — a protein found only on sporozoites' surface — in hopes of blocking the liver stage of infection. When a vaccinated child is bitten, the immune system should recognize the parasite and start making antibodies against it.

Scientists also are searching for next-generation alternatives. In the pipeline is an experimental vaccine made of whole malaria parasites dissected from mosquitoes' salivary glands but weakened so they won't make people sick. Sanaria Inc. has been testing its vaccine in adults, and is planning a large, late-stage study in Equatorial Guinea's Bioko Island.

And the U.S. National Institutes of Health soon will start initial tests of whether injecting people periodically with lab-made antibodies, rather than depending on the immune system to make them, could offer temporary protection during malaria season. Think of them as "potentially short-term vaccines," NIH's Dr. Robert Seder told a recent meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medi-

cine and Hygiene.

For now, only babies in parts of Malawi, Kenya and Ghana are eligible for the Mosquirix vaccine. After the vaccine was approved in 2015, the World Health Organization said it first wanted a pilot roll-out to see how well it worked in a few countries — in real-world conditions — before recommending that the vaccine be given more widely across Africa.

"Everyone is looking forward to getting it," said Temwa Mzengeza, who oversees Malawi's vaccine programs. Those eager for the shots include her husband, whom she had to stop from trying to get them, she said. Mzengeza used to come down with malaria several times a year until she started following her own advice to sleep under a net every night. Unlike many other kinds of infections, people can get malaria repeatedly, building up only a partial immunity.

In the pilot program that began last year, 360,000 children in the three countries are meant to be vaccinated annually. The first dose is given at about age 5 months and the final, fourth booster near the child's second birthday.

Experts say it is too early to know how well the vaccine is working. They're watching for malaria deaths, severe infections and cases of meningitis, something reported during studies but not definitively linked to the vaccine. "To do something completely new for malaria is exciting," said researcher Don Mathanga, who is leading the evaluation in Malawi.

The rainy season has brought new challenges, making some rural roads impassable and complicating efforts to track down children due for a shot. So far in Malawi, the first dose reached about half of the children targeted, about 35,000. That dropped to 26,000 for the second dose and 20,000 for the third.

That's not surprising for a new vaccine, Mzengeza said. "It will pick up with time." □

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In this July 20, 2015, file photo, rapper Eminem attends the premiere of "Southpaw" in New York.

Associated Press

Eminem drops surprise album, advocates changes to gun laws

Rapper Eminem once again dropped a surprise album, releasing "Music to Be Murdered By" on Friday — along with a video that calls for changes to gun laws.

The follow-up to 2018's "Kamikaze" — also released without warning — was announced on Twitter just after midnight.

The Detroit rapper's new music video for "Darkness," one of the album's 20 tracks, depicts a shooting at a concert. The lyrics and storyline of the video specifically allude to the 2017 mass shooting at a music festival in Las Vegas that left 58 people dead, making it the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history. It closes with audio and video footage of news broadcasts from other recent mass shooting around the U.S. and an appeal to register to vote.

"When will this end? When enough people care,"

reads the text at the end of the video. "Register to vote at vote.gov. Make your voice heard and help change gun laws in America."

A link to the music video on Eminem's website encourages viewers to contact or visit several gun violence prevention organizations, including Everytown for Gun Safety and Sandy Hook Promise.

The cover art features blood spatter and a bearded Eminem clad in a suit and fedora and holding a shovel. An alternate cover features the same splatter, with a now hatless Eminem holding both a hatchet and a gun to his head in an homage to Alfred Hitchcock's 1958 album of the same name: "Inspired by the master, Uncle Alfred!" Eminem tweeted.

"Music to Be Murdered By" is Eminem's 11th studio album, according to his website. □



In this Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2019, file photo, Recording Academy President/CEO Deborah Dugan participates in the 62nd Grammy Awards nominations news conference at Studio 43 at CBS Broadcast Center in New York.

Associated Press

Lawyer for just-ousted Grammys CEO fires back at academy

By MESFIN FEKADU

AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Recording Academy CEO Deborah Dugan, who the company announced Thursday was placed on administrative leave, has fired back in a statement through her lawyer, saying: "What has been reported is not nearly the story that needs to be told." The academy said late Thursday that its leader of just six months was put on leave following an allegation of misconduct by a senior leader at the organization — just 10 days before the 2020 Grammy Awards. But in a statement released Friday to The Associated Press, Dugan's attorney Bryan Freedman said there's more to the story.

"What has been reported

is not nearly the story that needs to be told. When our ability to speak is not restrained by a 28-page contract and legal threats, we will expose what happens when you 'step up' at the Recording Academy, a public nonprofit," the statement read. "The board determined this action to be necessary in order to restore the confidence of the Recording Academy's membership, repair Recording Academy employee morale, and allow the Recording Academy to focus on its mission of serving all music creators," the statement continued. "The Recording Academy Board of Trustees is committed to fostering a safe, diverse, and inclusive workplace, music industry, and society." Dugan's hire came after Neil Portnow chose not to seek an extension on his contract. Portnow had led the Grammys since 2002 and was criticized for saying women need to "step up" when asked about the lack of female winners at the 2018 Grammys during a backstage interview. Only two female performers won awards during the live telecast and the Grammys were criticized for not letting pop singer Lorde, the only women nominated for album of the year, perform at the show.

Before joining (RED), the AIDS organization that launched in 2006, Dugan was president of Disney Publishing Worldwide and executive vice president at EMI/Capitol Records. □

Johansson, Sterling K. Brown among SAG Awards presenters

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Scarlett Johansson, Sterling K. Brown and Taika Waititi will be up for Screen Actors Guild Awards and also handing them out at Sunday's ceremony.

They're part of a new batch of SAG Awards presenters announced Friday, along with Roman Griffin Davis, Jason Bateman, Lili

Reinhart and Kaitlyn Dever.

They'll join previously announced presenters including Lupita Nyong'o and Phoebe Waller-Bridge, as well as Leonardo DiCaprio, who will present the SAG Life Achievement Award to Robert De Niro. Most of the presenters are also nominees.

Johansson is nominated for best actress in a film for "Marriage Story," best supporting actress in a film for "Jojo Rabbit" and best cast in a film along with her "Jojo Rabbit" co-stars Waititi and Davis.

Brown, a four-time SAG Award winner, is nominated for best actor in a television drama for "This Is Us."



This combination of photos shows, from left, Scarlett Johansson, Sterling K. Brown and Taika Waititi, who will join Roman Griffin Davis, Jason Bateman, Lili Reinhart and Kaitlyn Dever as presenters at the 26th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards on Sunday, Jan. 19, 2020.

Associated Press

The 26th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards will be held Sunday at 8 p.m. EST at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. □



FOX News Channel's Bill Hemmer, anchor of news program *Bill Hemmer Reports*, poses for a photo on the set of his new show, Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, in New York.

Associated Press

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MON-FRI 4:00 | 6:40 | 9:20
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SUN 3:25 | 5:50 | 8:15

MON-FRI 4:20 | 6:40 | 9:00
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MON-THU 6:05 | 8:20
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SAT 3:50 | 6:05 | 8:20 | 10:35
SUN 3:50 | 6:05 | 8:20 | 8:10

PBP **FRI-SAT 11:20**

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PBP **MON-FRI 3:50** | 6:25 | 9:00
SAT-SUN 1:15 | 3:50 | 6:25 | 9:00

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Fox's Bill Hemmer replaces, but won't copy, Shepard Smith

By DAVID BAUDER

AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Bill Hemmer is not Shepard Smith, and no one should expect him to be.

The 55-year-old news anchor is a familiar face to Fox News Channel viewers, and will jar none of them Monday when he takes over the 3 p.m. ET news hour that Smith vacated when he abruptly quit the network late last year.

Smith cultivated a reputation for bluntly confronting the Trump administration and even fellow Fox personalities when he felt they misled people. That made him a target for criticism from some Fox viewers — and often President Donald Trump.

As for Hemmer, he's rarely in the news himself and has no interest in making opinion part of his job.

"I will be playing golf in Florida before that ever happens," Hemmer said. "I don't walk in the door thinking about 100 ways to change government. I don't think that way. I don't believe I'm built that way. I'm much more comfortable in this news lane than I would ever be as an opinion anchor."

Hemmer has anchored the midmorning hours at Fox since 2009. The Cincinnati native, who's now enough of a New Yorker to be afflicted with Knicks fandom, joined Fox from CNN in 2005. He was pleased but not necessarily surprised to get the promotion, which also comes with a greater role in breaking news stories, and took only 24 hours to accept it.

When Hemmer was named to Smith's time slot, the liberal watchdog organization Media Matters for America issued a news release, saying he had a history of pushing Republican talking points. It said the promotion illustrated that Fox was committed to pushing a pro-Trump line.

Asked for examples, Media Matters cited a Hemmer discussion last November about homeless villages in San Francisco. "It will blow your mind," he said. "They have working televisions inside."

When Hemmer interviewed Sen. Rand Paul, who opposed the killing of Iranian Gen. Qasem Soleimani, he noted that the Kentucky Republican had called it the "death of diplomacy." Hemmer asked, "Was there

much diplomacy to begin with?"

(Paul mentioned the Iranian nuclear deal signed during the Obama administration.)

But some of the examples Media Matters offered date back nearly a decade, with others illustrating the adversarial role a journalist sometimes must take.

Madeline Peltz of Media Matters said that what Hemmer has said in his job is not as important as what has not been said, "the fact that he has not stood up for the truth."

"Shep Smith's exit speaks more loudly than Bill Hemmer's entrance," she said.

Veteran news executive Michael Clemente, who supervised Hemmer at both CNN and Fox, said he's always known Hemmer as a fair journalist.

"He really has a completely open mind to opinions on all sides and where the truth lies, and he has been doing it that way back to his time at CNN," Clemente said. "He comes from the heartland, a big Ohio family, and I think he has a real appreciation" for what people are thinking away from the coasts. □

MSNBC's Maddow reaches record audience with Parnas interview

NEW YORK (AP) — There's no apparent impeachment fatigue among viewers of MSNBC's Rachel Maddow.

Her prime-time show, which has been on for more than 11 years, had its largest audience ever when 4.5 million people watched Maddow's interview on Wednesday with Lev Parnas, an associate of Rudy Giuliani, President Donald Trump's personal lawyer.

The Nielsen company said Maddow topped Fox News Channel's Sean Hannity, who usually has the top-rated cable news show. He had 3.7 million viewers that night.

Parnas, who Maddow had frequently talked about



In this Oct. 16, 2017 file photo, MSNBC television anchor Rachel Maddow, host of "The Rachel Maddow Show," moderates a panel at a forum called "Perspectives on National Security," at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, at Harvard University, in Cambridge, Mass.

Associated Press

on her show, spoke about his belief of Trump's knowl-

edge about what Giuliani was doing in the Ukraine. □

Portrait found in gallery's walls verified as missing Klimt

CHARLENE PELE and FRANCES D'EMILIO

PIACENZA, Italy (AP) — Art experts have confirmed that a painting discovered hidden inside an Italian art gallery's walls last month is Gustav Klimt's "Portrait of a Lady," which was stolen from the gallery nearly 23 years ago.

The authentication of the painting announced Friday solved one of the art world's enduring mysteries - where did the missing work end up? - but left several questions unanswered, including who had taken it and whether it ever left the museum's property.

A gardener at the Ricci Oddi Modern Art Gallery in the northern city of Piacenza who was clearing away ivy noticed a small panel door on a wall outside and opened it.

Inside the space, he found a plastic bag containing a painting that appeared to be the missing masterpiece.

"It's with no small emotion that I can tell you the work is authentic," Piacenza Prosecutor Ornella Chicca told reporters Friday while two police officers stood on either side of an easel bearing the recovered painting. "Portrait of a Lady" depicts a young woman sensually glancing over her shoulder against a dreamy moss green background. Klimt finished the painting in 1917, the year before he died. The Ricci Oddi gallery acquired it in 1925 and reported it missing in February 1997.

Since the gardener's discovery on Dec. 10, the

canvas had been kept in a vault of a local branch of Italy's central bank while experts used infrared radiation and other non-invasive techniques to determine if it was the original "Portrait of a Lady."

Experts said the painting was in remarkably good condition. One of the few signs of damage was a scratch near the edge of the canvas that may have resulted "from a clumsy effort to remove the portrait from its frame," said Anna Selleri, an art restorer from the National Gallery in Bologna.

The experts who did the verification work found persuasive evidence in the work of their peers more than two decades ago.

An Italian high school student, preparing for her graduation exams in 1996, noticed striking similarities between the painting that would go missing a year later and an earlier Klimt work of a woman with a similar posture and gaze but wearing a hat and scarf, accessories that the artist didn't include in "Portrait of a Lady."

Intrigued by the observations of the student — who went on to become an art researcher herself - experts back then examined the artwork in the Piacenza gallery's collection and found that Klimt had painted it on top of an earlier portrait of a woman.

Those studying the work in recent weeks, with the aid of X-rays, saw the earlier portrait.

Selleri said the radiation analysis revealed that while



The painting which was found last December near an art gallery and believed to be the missing Gustav Klimt's painting 'Portrait of a Lady' is displayed during a press conference in Piacenza, Italy, Friday, Jan. 17, 2020.

Associated Press

painting the later portrait, Klimt didn't redo much of the face, but used whitish pigment from the earlier version for the skin.

"Portrait of a Lady" was officially listed as missing on Feb. 22, 1997 but might have been snatched from a gallery wall a few days earlier, during the exhibit preparation work.

So who stole the painting? Chicca said police were studying some traces of organic material on the recovered canvas in hopes they might provide leads. Asked if authorities knew whether the piece had ever left the gallery's grounds, investigators said that's something else they hope to find out.

As for why and when the painting ended up stashed behind a wall, journalist

Anne-Marie O'Connor, the author of a book about the dramatic fortunes of Klimt's "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer," has an educated theory.

Before the 1990s, Klimt was largely "considered an Austrian painter, but his stature really grew at this point," O'Connor said. When "Portrait of a Lady" was taken, the value of the art nouveau artist's paintings was "soaring," she said.

O'Connor ventured that

perhaps whoever took the

painting stowed it behind

the gallery's walls while

waiting for news about the heist to die down but the stolen work proved "too hot to handle."

"It would have been hard

to sell it to a private buyer"

on the so-called gray market, O'Connor noted in a

phone interview from London.

Some of Klimt's works have experienced stunning turns of fortune.

O'Connor's 2012 book "The Lady In Gold" chronicled the ultimately successful effort by a woman to gain back Klimt's "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer."

That portrait was snatched from the Bloch-Bauer home in Vienna in 1941 by a Nazi officer. The woman, Bloch-Bauer's niece, later sold the painting to cosmetics mogul Ronald Lauder in 2006 for \$135 million.

Another celebrity Klimt piece was a second portrait of the woman, "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer II." Oprah Winfrey eventually purchased that painting and reportedly sold it a few years ago for \$150 million. □

Christopher Tolkien, son of Lord of the Rings creator, dies

LONDON (AP) — Christopher Tolkien, who played a major role protecting the legacy of his father's "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, has died. He was 95.

The Tolkien Society and publisher HarperCollins UK confirmed Tolkien's death.

The Centre Hospitalier de la Dracenie, a hospital in southern France, said the son of author J.R.R. Tolkien died there Thursday.

Tolkien's life work was closely identified with that of his father. Among the books the younger Tolkien worked on were "The Silmarillion," "The Children Of Hurin," and other texts that flesh out the complex world his father created.

He also drew the original maps that adorned the three Lord of the Rings books - "The Fellowship of the Ring," "The Two Tow-

ers" and "The Return of the King" - when they were published in the 1950s.

Tolkien Society chairman Shaun Gunner said "millions of people around the world will be forever grateful to Christopher for bringing us" so many of his father's literary works. "Christopher's commitment to his father's works have seen dozens of publications released, and his own work as an

academic in Oxford demonstrates his ability and skill as a scholar," he said. "We have lost a titan and he will be sorely missed."

J.R.R. Tolkien scholar Dimitra Fimi said Christopher Tolkien helped the public understand his father's works. "Tolkien studies would never be what it is today without Christopher Tolkien's contribution," she said. "From editing 'The Sil-

marillion' to the mammoth task of giving us 'The History Of Middle-earth' series, he revealed his father's grand vision of a rich and complex mythology."

The newspaper for the Var region in southern France, Var Matin, said Tolkien and his wife, Baillie, had lived quietly on the edge of the village of Aups since 1975. No funeral date has been set, the newspaper said. □

Muslim millennial's site dispels stereotypes for millions

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Today she travels the world, attends a red-carpet movie premiere and sits on panels with astronauts, former presidents and feminist icons.

But in the years after 9/11, Amani Al-Khatahtbeh was just a New Jersey teenager, writing a blog from her bedroom. She used the blog to connect with other young Muslim girls and defy stereotypes. At the time, the only reflections of herself in the news seemed to be men in orange jumpsuits who looked like her father and women who seemed silent and oppressed, she said.

"Being bombarded with those headlines growing up and never feeling represented by them, I did what any millennial would do, which was to turn to social media," Al-Khatahtbeh said. "I decided to put my own place out there and create that space for us to talk back."

A decade later, her MuslimGirl.com site is an online magazine with a global audience writing about how it feels to be the only woman in a hijab at a kickboxing class, offering beauty tips and covering stories of teenagers fighting Islamophobia. Last year, the domain that she bought for \$7 had more than 2 million visitors.

The site "is the biggest English-language online platform for Muslim women voices," the tech entrepreneur, now 27, said at her family's video game store in New Jersey. "Our goal is to reclaim our narrative."

She was 9 when the airliners struck the World Trade Center towers, and she remembers the warning of her Jordanian immigrant father: "They're going to blame us."

In the aftermath, she was bullied. People threw eggs at her home and slashed her mother's tires. Her family faced such a backlash that her father temporarily relocated them to Jordan.

While she is proud of being "born and raised a



In this Dec. 19, 2019, photo, Amani Al-Khatahtbeh, founder of Muslimgirl.com, records a podcast pilot at Spotify's headquarters in New York.

Associated Press



In this Dec. 27, 2019, photo, Amani Al-Khatahtbeh, center, sits near the back of the room at the Islamic Center of New York University during Friday prayers.

Associated Press

Jersey girl," it was only in Jordan that she began to take pride in her roots. She learned Arabic and appreciated Middle Eastern food and hospitality. When she returned to the U.S., she began to wear a headscarf as an act of defiance against a rising anti-Muslim tide.

"I lost a lot of friends, people started treating me differently," she said. But she also became an ambassador for her faith. Students, even teachers, stopped her in school and asked about the Quran and Islam.

"I had to learn as much as I possibly could about my own religion, the ins and outs of it, what Islamophobes were saying about it, so that I could understand how to respond," she said.

She started the blog at 17

with help from friends at her local mosque. Most of the work is still a grassroots effort. Her younger brother, Ameer, a journalism student at Rutgers University, helps run communications. Although the site pays a



In this Dec. 20, 2019, photo, Amani Al-Khatahtbeh, founder of MuslimGirl.com, sits for an interview inside her family's video game and electronic store business in Somerville, N.J.

Associated Press

low her on social media under the hashtag "#muslimgirlarmy. She also has detractors who say she is too Americanized or too progressive. Some question her appearance, such as the way she wears her hijab or shows her arms. She also has tattoos, an eyebrow ring and long manicured nails.

"A lot of times, at any given moment, I can have like two completely different, opposing parties be bonded by their criticism of us," Al-Khatahtbeh said.

These days, she divides her time between Los Angeles and New York, attending meetings for potential business partners and live-recording moments of her life for Instagram and Twitter.

In recent years, Forbes magazine chose her for its "30 Under 30" list of top achievers. Michelle Obama asked her to speak at the United State of Women Summit. She was also part of a panel that included female astronaut Cody Coleman and was moderated by former President Bill Clinton. Most recently, VaynerMedia founder Gary Vaynerchuk became an investor.

The site's topics — in categories like #woke, #fit and #fierce — range widely. Posts include a list of the top 10 most beautiful verses from the Quran, a look at Marvel's newest Muslim superhero and a story about how hijab-wearing Olympic fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad has a Barbie doll made in her likeness.

The site and its founder have attracted a legion of devoted fans who fol-

"It was such a full-circle moment for me, because when I was a little girl, Princess Jasmine was one of the only representations that I had growing up," she said.

Being on the committee allowed her "to try to course-correct some of the problematic stereotypes" in the first movie, including some that she did not notice as a child.

She pointed to two examples: The opening song talked about a faraway place that is "barbaric." And Jasmine was dressed in a belly dancing outfit and chains in a "hyper-sexualized and oppressive way."

On her site, Al-Khatahtbeh is especially proud of stories that deal with race and sexuality. "Of course, female sexuality is honored within our religion, and it shouldn't be something we shy away from or think of as a taboo." □